Religion or Faith

Walter Lowrie

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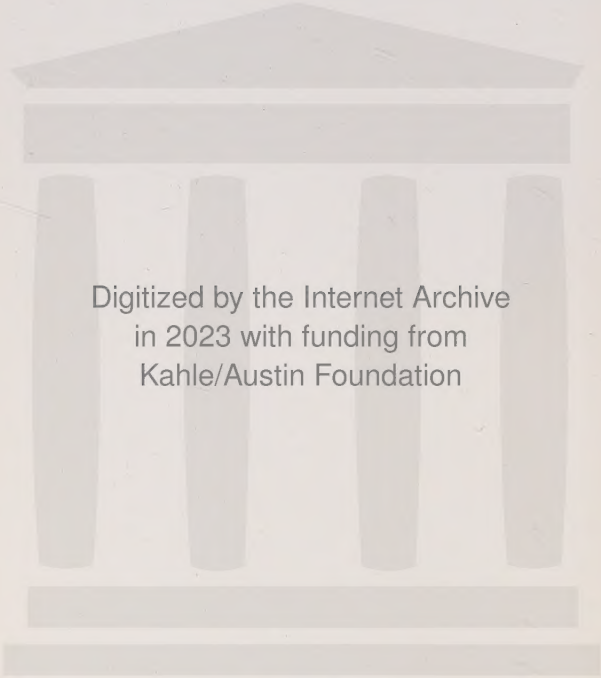
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RELIGION OR FAITH

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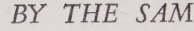

MONUMENTS OF THE EARLY CHURCH. The Macmillan Co. 1901–1925

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L'UNITÀ DELLA CHIESA E I SUOI PROBLEMI. "Fede e Vita," Roma. 1929

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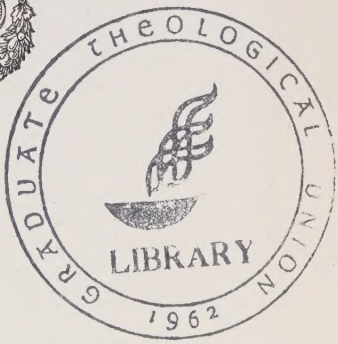
GAUDIUM CRUCIS: A Good Friday Meditation. Longmans, Green & Co. 1905

ABBA, FATHER: A Comment on the Lord's Prayer. Longmans, Green & Co. 1908

RELIGION OR FAITH

by

WALTER LOWRIE



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BOSTON · MASSACHUSETTS

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First Edition

MADE IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED
TO MY SEVEREST CRITIC
AND MOST LOYAL FRIEND
A PRODIGIOUS PERSON
MY SISTER SARAH

PREFACE

THE six chapters of this book were first published in Italian, appearing one by one during this current year in *Richerche Religiose,* a liberal review which must be described as Roman Catholic although it is on the Index. In Italy they aroused an unexpected interest, among Protestants as well as Catholics. A daily paper pirated one of these chapters and spread it over an entire page. There is no danger that a secular daily in America will follow this example, nor is there any reason to expect that such notions as are here advanced will meet with acclaim there.

I have no delusion about the difficulty of getting these ideas across. Nevertheless, these chapters were written in the first place for my own countrymen, and as a justification of certain incidental traits which appear in my recent book " Jesus According to St.

Mark," and which, so far as they were observed, proved bewildering, if not offensive.

The bewilderment at hearing a parson "speak disparagingly of religion and religious people" may be somewhat relieved, if one will accept the distinction which is made here between religion and faith; but I cannot hope to avoid all offense when I am engaged in attacking the pet prejudices of our day: our extravagant optimism about man; the reverence we have for religion without faith; our determination to have our cake and eat it *now;* and the calm assumption that there has never been an authentic revelation, and therefore can be no authoritative dogma.

The prejudice against eschatology needs to be mentioned separately, though it is not altogether unconnected with the others. Eschatology is an attitude which I could largely explain and justify in my book on St. Mark; for it is an historical subject first of all, and only from the Gospels can we expect an answer to the question whether Jesus did or did not look forward, beyond

this world, to a heavenly hope. From the Gospels also we must learn what sort of a hope his was. If the eschatology of Jesus had not been clearly presented in "St. Mark," that book would have been more acceptable. But, if my position was not convincingly proved there, by the support of a hundred texts, it would be in vain to essay that task in any other connection. But here (in the last chapter) I argue the question again on other grounds, pointing to the eschatology of St. Paul and the Church of his day.

Finding that the phrase "thoroughgoing eschatology" is misunderstood, I seek here to make my exposition more ingratiating to the public. I would persuade folks that for *them* (whatever may be the interest of the historical critics in the game they are playing) the issue is *not* whether they can appropriate the extravagances of apocalyptic imagery, or whether they can discern justly between thoroughgoing eschatology and milder forms, but whether they can continue at all to entertain the heavenly hope

that is characteristic of Christianity. There is the rub. For the heavenly hope, if it is real, cannot but render pallid our interest in this world. Hence the more real it is, the more men are disposed to reject it with furious laughter. The assertion that "the trend of scientific historical study is away from eschatology" means just that. It reflects the will to disbelieve.

I can hardly hope that even those who still call themselves Evangelicals will welcome this effort to reinstate the heavenly hope. They too have learned to speak contemptuously of "other-worldliness." Neither can I count upon them to welcome the reassertion in strange words of their traditional position: that man is man, and that God is God; that man is a sinner salvable only by God's grace; that Jesus the Saviour saves utterly and forever; that man cannot save himself by his religion (be it mystical, ritual, or practical); that still less is he able to save others (or the whole world!) by the cultural programme he calls the Kingdom of God; and, finally, that our God is a tran-

scendant God of whom we can have no knowledge but by his revelation of himself.

A generation ago, men who repudiated the old theology, with the pretext of rejecting Calvinism, had a bad conscience, for they were haunted by a suspicion that they were repudiating not merely Calvin and Luther and perhaps Augustine, but Peter and Paul and the authentic Word of God. The generation that has now come on the stage feels no such qualms, never having heard of anything but Liberal Theology, and knowing very little of that. Today it would seem ridiculous for any one to argue in favor of the old proposition that "man's chief end is to glorify God," but almost more ridiculous to attribute serious importance to a dictum so absurd by arguing against it. So without proof and without contradiction it is accepted as self-evident that man's chief end is *not* to glorify God. A long while ago the "Spectator" described the small coterie which gathered about Mrs. Humphrey Ward as "the Society of Vague Christians." How few there are now who would repudi-

ate this as a description of their own position. It has become our ideal for the universal Church, and would be an apt name for the united sects when they have pooled their characteristic distinctions. It is not strange that many look to Catholicism (of one sort or another) as the only refuge from vagueness and the confusion of tongues.

This situation need not dismay us. For if "the present state of religion" is not so solid as we could wish and its prospects seem none too brilliant; if we are aware how weak a hold has personal religion upon the family and the individual, also how petty a place is accorded to organized religion (the Churches) by the state and secular society; it would seem as if, instead of standing pat to resist attacks upon our vague dogmas and ineffective attitudes, many would be seeking eagerly after a better way. That there is much seeking of this sort is proved by the popularity of new religions. But there is obviously much to be said for a return to the old ways which proved effective in the days when the Church was strong through faith,

when the policy of nations was moulded by it, and when the individual was strengthened by his faith at the same time that he was mastered by it. And this way is the more powerfully recommended to us because it is not exotic and remote: in times not long past it was our own tradition, by which we were fashioned into what we are, and to which we must attribute the superiorities of which we most like to boast.

However, it is not my purpose to recommend here what has been called " the Reformation *settlement*." Very far from it! For I value the Reformation as the great *unsettlement*, — an emergence of the disturbing crisis which was the life also of Catholicism in its great epochs, which we trace back to the New Testament, back to the Prophets, back to God. One might reflect cynically that in our day we are as completely unsettled as we conceivably could be. Just so. It is that unsettlement which needs to be unsettled by a touch of the absolute, an apprehension of the Reality which is beneath all seeming, a Word of God which is capable

of polarizing the errant atoms, turning their mad dance into a cosmos. Our present unsettlement is not primarily social, for it has its origin in the individual, in the chaos of his thoughts. It is to the individual the Word of God comes, if it comes at all. And it can come only as a shock which disintegrates our temporary and insecure positions. But these positions, however insecure, unreasonable and self-contradictory, are established by habit (that is to say, presumably, by delicate connections established in the brain) and as the process of destruction is painful, we instinctively resist it.

The Word of God, though we are aware of it as antithetical to our positions, is not a mere *position* alongside of others; it is the shock of the Eternal in the temporal. Least of all does it fix us in a stationary position, a "settlement," established once for all by a "faith once delivered." Rather, it prompts in us an attitude: it brings us up standing, but with a definite orientation and the implication of movement in a particular direction.

If I were appealing here solely to the authority of the "good Book," I should be thought too old fashioned or too heroical. But I can claim that, in the positions I here maintain, I am supported by the most virile and triumphant school of theology in modern Germany. I will not say that I am a "Barthian," but I am not loath to confess that the whole color and substance of this small book is referable to the "School of Crisis" (especially to Barth, Gogarten and Thurneysen) to its precursors also (Kierkegaard, Blumhardt and Dostoyewski) and to its satellites (if Tillich and Bultmann will accept such a designation). My obligations are so general and so great that it would be pedantic to acknowledge them in detail.

I am also very much obliged to Dr. Samuel McComb for his judicious criticism of my manuscript.

Walter Lowrie

Roma
S. Paul's-within-the-walls
October 1929

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RELIGION OR FAITH

RELIGION OR FAITH

Chapter I

RELIGION OR FAITH

Religion and faith are so intimately associated in our experience that we find it difficult to distinguish them in thought. The reader may therefore be surprised at seeing these terms contrasted, and perhaps will be impatient at seeing religion disparaged in this comparison.

But at least a distinction between these terms must be admitted as soon as it is pointed out, and that is enough to condemn our common use of the word religion as if it were equivalent to faith or inclusive of it — descriptive, that is to say, of all that there is in Christianity. Commonly we use the word religion instead of Christianity, without pausing even to qualify it as "our" religion. This mode of speech implies two

contradictory assumptions: the first is that Christianity is simply a religion (therefore only one religion among others); the second is that as a religion it is so far superior to all others that they need not be taken into account. Both of these assumptions are expressed in Harnack's dictum that "Christianity is not a religion, it is religion." The proud exclusiveness of primitive Christianity gives place to this proud inclusiveness. It is evident that Christianity can assert an exclusive claim only on the ground of its faith, — that is, by an appeal to truth. As a religion it is not contradictory to other religions, but only different, and perhaps superior. When we attempt to assign to the different religions their appropriate place in a scale of values, we instinctively feel that truth is not the appropriate criterion to measure by. We may appeal to the Good or to the Beautiful for the relative justification of religions; but to faith we must apply the idea of the True; and because that is an absolute principle of valuation (tolerating no comparative degrees of trueness) we often

fear to resort to it. The fact that we speak frequently of our religion and seldom of our faith suggests a suspicion (which is confirmed in many ways) that faith is the factor in Christianity we are most inclined to ignore. For this reason it is timely to distinguish faith and religion, so that we may not continue thoughtlessly to confound them, and unconsciously to suppress the factor which historically is most characteristic of Christianity.

Our common locution is nowhere so evidently inept as when we essay by rational arguments to justify "our religion" as against rational attack, from the side of philosophy, or history, or science. For religion as a psychological fact (a biological fact, one might say) needs no justification, and indeed is not open to attack by rational argument. Its existence (where it exists) is its own justification for existing. Our task is not to defend it but to make it conform more fully to the ideas of the Beautiful and the Good. But faith (which is more or less implied in every religion) is obviously open

to attack by rational argument from every side. Christianity peculiarly so, both because its faith is explicit, and because it is vulnerable even on the side of history. Its very strength is its weakness. For Christians the decisive line of defense is the faith, and the fact that we have retired so generally to the line of religion implies that we feel our faith insecure. We fall back upon religion, but we are not safe there; for what we are anxious to preserve is not a vague religiousness but some particular religion. There is no religion which has not some tincture of faith, and what is specifically challenged in our day is that minimum of faith which is implied in all religions, and without which our experience of religion, being merely a matter of feeling, could not be consciously related to the whole of our experience. What we speak of as "the conflict between religion and science" is in fact a conflict of faiths. The Christian champion who engages in that conflict is not seeking to defend the specific faith which he holds as Christian, but only the extreme minimum

of faith which all religions have in common, — the apprehension, namely, that the physical laws of dynamics do not adequately describe the whole of reality. Only in that sense is it a conflict in behalf of religion. Among modern writers only Dr. Haldane, in his recent Gifford Lectures, is scrupulous enough to contrast science, not with religion, but with "religious beliefs." Really the conflict is between two faiths.

A rigorous method might require us to define at the outset what religion is in itself, and what is the faith which we are about to contrast with it. But we have no knowledge of such a thing as religion *in itself*, a thing entirely undetermined by faith; and faith is hardly to be found without any expression in the *genre* of religion. This fact accounts in large part for the notorious difficulty of defining either faith or religion. These two factors, as we have already remarked, are so intimately associated in our experience that we find it difficult to distinguish them in thought. But to distinguish faith and religion is precisely the aim of this

chapter, and when we have done that we shall not be very far from a definition of them.

But here at the outset we may be able to agree that religion has somewhat more (or more directly) to do with feeling than has faith, and that faith, though it includes an element of personal trust and is oriented in the direction of hope, has somewhat more to do with the intellect, — that religion, therefore can be dealt with as an experience, whereas faith cannot properly be understood except in relation to the truth which is its object. Religion finds satisfaction in worship, whereas faith expresses itself characteristically in theology. Only in a secondary way has either to do with moral conduct, — though this may be accounted a necessary result and the most important of all.

We do not have to wait for a precise definition before we can perceive that in using the word religion as if it were equivalent to Christianity we obscure the subject of our discourse and are liable, in the darkness, to stumble into error. For clearly religion

means much more than that, and it means also much less. It applies as well to cults which are not Christian, while on the other hand it cannot properly be stretched so far as to include the most distinctive feature of Christianity, which is its faith.

Revelation is a word which, if it is used at all today, is offered at a discount which too plainly betrays the fact that it has no real value for us. That is partly because we have long been accustomed to use it in a connection which makes sheer nonsense of it. "A revealed religion" is a contradiction in terms, — if by religion we mean only what is implied by religiousness. For our religiousness, together with all modes of its expression, is plainly not a revelation. Our religiousness is native to us, and the modes of its expression in cult and worship, though they may be hallowed by a long, even a millennial tradition, can ultimately be traced to their origin, and that is found to be not God but man. That is the reason why religions are all so much alike. But there is at least no manifest absurdity in speaking of a revealed

faith. Indeed, if faith is to include some notion of the unknown God, it is not easy to imagine how we might come by it except by revelation — by God's revelation of himself.

Revelation is a word which is clearly relevant to faith and clearly necessary to it. But it is not necessary to religion, — and that is one of the reasons why we say so little about it. Myth suffices for the uses of religion. It is perfectly adequate for this use. But myth, in spite of the claims it commonly makes to supernatural origin, can easily be traced to man. It is not revelation. Like any form of art, it may be an appropriate *expression* of faith, but it cannot be accepted as an adequate *ground* for an attitude which must be conceived as a function of truth. That is what faith is, or what it conceives itself to be, even if the truth on which it relies turns out to be unreality.

We talk much today about the need of a "revival of religion." The necessity is obvious, but the phrase is ominous. Why do we not speak about a revival of faith? The re-

vivals of religion associated with the names of Whitfield and Wesley found already at hand a definite tradition of faith to lay hold on. But now when no definite faith can be presupposed on the part of the many, it is a fond delusion that religion in its characteristic Christian form can be revived before faith is revived. We seek in vain to accomplish the revival of Christian religion by appealing to the instinct of the herd by the organized propaganda which we have found effective in other spheres. Corybantic methods are effective, as every psychologist will admit, but the effects are not permanent. Equally effective are the Persian and Greek methods of reviving religion by the use of hashish and alcohol. If by any of these methods we should succeed in " putting it over," religion would not stay put. And even in the moment of success it would not be the Christian religion, which rests upon conviction.

I use unwillingly the phrase "Christian religion," for I am inclined to assert that Christianity is not a religion. Here at the

outset, however, such an assertion would seem a sheer paradox. I have to confess that it could not be justified unless we were to restrict the word Christianity more narrowly than we commonly do, ignoring the cult and thinking only of the essential distinction of its faith. Here I content myself with the more sober affirmation that the word religion does not describe the nature of Christianity completely or even essentially.

Even this word Christianity, as we commonly use it, is too vague to serve us well for accurate thinking. Were I not fearful of demanding too much of the reader, I would ask him to discard it altogether for the time being, in favor of the concrete terms which we find in the New Testament, such as the Gospel, the Way, the Faith and the Church. That, however, is a counsel of perfection which I do not myself intend to follow in this universe of discourse. For here at the outset we can agree that this word shall denote for us the integral expression of Christian faith, life and worship — the

total result of the inpact of Jesus Christ upon human society. Understood in this sense, it would be untrue to say that Christianity is not a religion. For our definition affirms that Christianity contains several human factors, and among them religion looms conspicuous. If we affirm that "man is a religious animal," we imply that religion is human — I would say, all-too-human. Christianity, in every exemplification of it we are familiar with, represents not merely a faith, but also a human reaction to it, which may be more or less religious. Giving to the word religion its proper and distinctive value, most people will agree that mysticism is more religious than rationalism, Catholicism than Protestantism, and Methodism than Puritanism — yet the essential faith in Jesus Christ the Lord of Glory may be the same throughout these various manifestations of Christianity.

It is evidently reasonable to distinguish between Christianity (thus broadly understood) and the specific faith which gives it character. When we have done that we shall

not be likely to fall into the common error of discovering the "essence of Christianity" in the common human factors of religion and morality. That is a usual way of begging the question whether there may be any objective and divine element in Christianity, and whether there is any sense in speaking about it as a revelation. When we have omitted the Faith from our definition of Christianity we have emptied out the baby with the bath.

It has been agreed that, with care, we may continue to use the word Christianity. But now I would counsel the reader to drop from his vocabulary the word religion — at least to use it sparingly and to employ it justly. We use the word so much and so broadly and so wildly that it will be difficult for us to use it rightly. But all that can be exacted here is that we endeavor to think about the central factor of Christianity without the help (or hindrance) of this word — above all that we cease to regard the word religion as an adequate description of what Christianity essentially is. You may

think this a hard task. But reflect that the Old Testament (a most religious book!) gets along very well without this word, while in the New Testament it is used in only three places and with obvious disdain. It is not a pedantic interest in the curiosities of Biblical literature which prompts me to remark upon this astonishing fact. It must seem still more astonishing that for more than fifteen hundred years the word religion was not used in the Church to describe the specific character of Christianity. We owe that innovation to humanism. Zwingli was perhaps the first to speak of Christianity simply as " religion." Calvin as his successor followed him also in this, entitling his great work on Christian doctrine " The Institute of the Christian Religion." Ever since then we have accepted this use of the word as a matter of course — never guessing into what confusion it would bring us.

Christianity, if it is regarded simply as a religion, cannot decline the ordeal of comparison with other religions — the old

"ethnic" religions, which are not all of them outworn, and the new religions, which for their newness' sake claim to be superior to Christianity. This embarrassment was not contemplated in the sixteenth century, when no religion but Christianity was tolerated in Christendom and all others were held in contempt. But it is now a long time since anthropology and the comparative study of religions compelled us to subject Christianity to a candid comparison. It is more than forty years since the World's Congress of Religions in Chicago apprised the public of this new situation. The protest of the Churches was violent but futile. For the justification of such a comparison was implicitly conceded when Christianity was regarded simply as a religion. There was cold comfort to be found in the conviction that our religion could prove its superiority to all others; for that meant no absolute superiority, no difference in kind, but only in quality. All religions are alike in so far as they are religions. The more they differ, the more they come to the same thing. They

may have one only God, or many, or none at all; but they possess in common the same quality of religiousness, so that we need not be much surprised at discovering similarities of cult and myth in the most remote religions. I can well believe the story told of a Japanese traveller, a man of culture who had learned to despise the Buddhism and Shintoism of his own land, and on coming to England was disposed to expect that Christianity would appear immensely superior. Unfortunately, he attended a more than usually elaborate function in St. Paul's — seeing nothing of Christianity but chasubles and dalmatics and copes and mytres — and he left with the petulant exclamation, "It is just the same old thing!" If Christianity is regarded simply as a religion, this is an unimpeachable verdict. How can it be otherwise, if religion is always and everywhere a human reaction to the "numinous," — this being the word which served Rudolf Otto in his effective proof of the unity which underlies all the varieties of religious experience?

"The Varieties of Religious Experience" is the title of William James' famous book which demonstrates psychologically how human a thing religion is. We live in an age of psychologism, and the psychological study of religion is pursued within the Church as well as without it, by those who are intent upon explaining religion as well as by those who desire to explain it away. We have not taken offense at any of these explanations, — unless perhaps at Freud's description of religion as a sublimation of the *libido*. We have rather been inclined to welcome such studies because, though they discredit the absolute claims religion makes for itself, they compel men to regard this fantastic phenomenon as a reality. We had an absurd fear that our religion might not be real. But reality is implied in the fact that religion is accounted a proper subject for psychological analysis. There is, indeed, nothing more real to us than our psychic (soulish) experience — and nothing, of course, more human.

It is very far from my purpose here to

make a plea for " a more real religion." All our religions are only too massively real and human. Religion pure and undefiled by revelation is an effort to raise oneself by tugging at the boot straps. It is a presumptuous attempt at auto-salvation. The Tower of Babel is its ancient symbol. Without any help from the gods, or in spite of them, we would climb the steep ascent of heaven. Jack and the Beanstalk is the modern myth for it. That is not a true story, but religious experience is real. Attending a camp-meeting as a boy I was impressed at seeing a recently converted woman climbing the smooth bole of a lofty tree. It would be absurd to doubt the reality of her experience, for before she " got religion " she must have lacked courage and strength to perform such a feat. I have just been reading the current number of " Asia " (for October 1929). The fact that six of its nine articles are devoted to religion suggests that it might properly be called a religious magazine. At all events, it proves how widespread is the interest in religion . . .

and how massive is the reality of religious experience. Romain Rolland relates with hearty sympathy the deplorable religious experiences of Ramakrishna; an American teacher in Cairo describes with ghastly realism " A Dervish Prayer-Meeting; " and a teacher in the Philippines is not ashamed to recount the gross experience of his own initiation into the priesthood of a savage tribe. Other articles deal with the difficulty religion creates for the Hindu in search for a wife, or with the substantial barriers it erects between man and man. Real, all-too-real!

It is thought incredible that a religious person should " speak disparagingly of religion and religious people."

But I am quite as ready to disparage irreligious people who are so mean spirited that they quench the ambition to be good and refuse to heed the " upward calling of God in Christ Jesus " because they regard it as a fantastic impossibility.

We are men of ruined blood,
Therefore comes it we are wise.
Fish we are that love the mud,
Rising to no fancy flies.

But at all events, religion is not an impossible possibility. If godliness is only religion, we can all of us be godly if we will. And the ambition to be good — even superlatively good, or saintly — is not thwarted by any physical or mental defect or mediocrity, such as would render a man unfit to excel as a boxer, or as a musician, or as a mathematician. This impossibility is conditioned only by the will. Our failure, as William Law asserts, is not due to the difficulty of realizing perfectly an ideal, but to the fact that we have " not even formed the bare resolution to please God in all our actions."

But suppose that we are not of those who

Through cowardice have made the great refusal.

Why, precisely *then* it is we may discover how much reason we have to be ashamed.

We discover how human we still are when we are at the tiptoe of our attainment, as religious men, as men of prayer. If prayer represents our highest reach, it is also our most baffling experience.

What prayer of ours is untainted with *libido?* Precisely when our prayer is warmest (with *eros* after God!) we are most tempted to ignore the "distance" which separates creature from Creator. And how much our *ego* intrudes — even in such a prayer as "God be merciful to *me* a sinner." There is danger that when we have made that prayer we may go down to our house *consciously* justified and say, "What a good boy am I!"

It must be evident that I am not now thinking of the grosser faults of our prayers, of careless, perfunctory, absurd, or lying prayers. Least of all am I inclined to distinguish *here* between "extemporary" and "liturgical" prayers: prayers eloquently addressed to the people, and prayers addressed to God in impeccable form. Here are differences which are psychologically im-

portant to us as souls — but perhaps not to God, who is a spirit. I am supposing that we are at the height of our human possibility, and there it is we are sternly confronted with a, *Halt!* "God is in heaven, and thou upon earth, therefore let thy words be few." Or, as we say at the beginning of our Morning Prayer, "The Lord is in his holy temple: let all the world keep silence before him." Evidently we are essaying to do what ought not to be done. Yet if we cease to cry, *Kyrie eleeson* (God have mercy), our heart fails us.

But God is the strength of our heart
And our portion forever.

While I say such things, applying them to others, I am thinking of "my proper shame," of the fact that I am not merely a pious man, but a priest. I can forget the common wretchednesss of the human lot, and the particular absurdities which attach to the godly — I can forget that I am compounded of Babbit and Pecksniff — when I

reflect upon my situation as a prophet and a priest.

Priests have always been fair sport for the satirists — perhaps in ancient Assyria and in Egypt, and certainly from Peregrinus Proteus to Grantry. The pity is that they often caricature us so outrageously that we do not recognize ourselves. Our detractors dwell upon faults we rarely show, because, as outsiders, they cannot imagine the worst that might truly be said of us. Their exaggerations leave me cold, whereas I burn at the sight of the clerical tailors' advertisements, which depict me as I am, smugly unctious, awfully respectable, separated visibly by my clothes from all wholehearted, natural men, the "healthy-minded" — and more essentially separated by garments of habit of which I cannot so easily divest myself.

Even Methodist and Baptist ministers may allow themselves to be called priests when this title is no vain boast but means only that they share the reproach of the people of God. At any rate, their satirists will not

let them off with an alibi or an alias. Ministers, prophets and priests — bonzes, imans, medicine-men — the more they differ, the more they come to the same thing — each more grotesquely absurd than the other! They all claim to be better than other men — or at least to be more intimate with God. They have mastered the technique of religion, and therefore presume to address men on behalf of God, and to address God on behalf of men. To my mind, the clergy cannot be too much ridiculed in play and novel. It helps to remind us that "we have this treasure in earthen vessels." "We Apostles," says St. Paul, "are an amusing spectacle to the world and to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake."

But there falls some share of this reproach upon the pious laity — insiders, churchgoers, "professors" (who do not scruple to profess themselves priests) — unless they make it clear that they are *not* a "peculiar people" and mean nothing in particular by the vow that they will remain Christ's faithful soldiers and servants unto

their life's end. *Then* their reproach (even from the outsider) is a different one and still harder to bear.

Daniel and his two companions (the "Three Children") are either the most perfect examples of piety, or else the most perfect parody of it that fiction presents to us. They showed how much better they were than other men by eating *kosher*. Pulse and water was their diet, for they despised the king's meat and the wine which he drank. And they proved to be "ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all the realm." More especially they were *holier* than other men — and they didn't care who might know it. They said their prayers before an open window — for they didn't care who might see it.

Compared with this picture of the pious, the outsider (the unbeliever) shows off to advantage. I am often inclined to envy him. His wholeheartedness contrasts favorably with my double-mindedness. It is true that his is "the heart that never plighted troth" to God, but for that reason he cannot be

charged with disloyalty. His single-mindedness may be on a lower plane than my duplicity of mind, but it has at least the fine quality of this defect. We may remember that only on a very low plane — among money-changers and dishonest stewards — Jesus could discover a perfect example of singleness of heart. Such men have an eye single to their obvious and immediate advantage and are not distracted by the "fancy flies" which elude me, such as holiness, eternity, and "the hope of the glory of God."

Why compass sea and land to make a proselyte of such a man? With what grace can I bid him exchange his healthy-mindedness for what Kierkegaard calls my "sickness unto God"? If he be not a sinner, weary and heavy laden, such as Jesus invited, it is a mistake to entice the outsider into the Church.

I return to a drier and more philosophic line of argument.

If we would make comparison between religions with respect to their religiousness,

the most obvious scale to measure by is intensity of feeling. In this comparison the severer forms of Christianity make a poor showing alongside of the "gay religions full of pomp and gold" (the orgiastic cult of Serapis or of the Magna Mater), or alongside of the numinous experience of the sublime in nature ("a sense sublime of something far more deeply interfused") or alongside of the solemn ceremony organized with psychological art (the "technique of worship") to produce a numinous impression in church or temple. Going a little deeper, we may find cause to suspect that theism is not so *religious* as some other doctrines. In this comparison perhaps polytheism outranks it ("I'd rather be a pagan suckled in a creed outworn"), perhaps atheistic Buddhism, perhaps Anthroposophism! If these comparisons make us pause, we may perhaps conclude that we have been employing an inappropriate criterion. Would it be wiser to ask (pragmatically) which religion *works* best? Or are we frank enough to say that we choose the religion we *like* best? Or is it pos-

sible that *truth* is a more appropriate criterion? A decision in this sense would be momentous, for it would reinstate faith and justify dogma. More than that! For the only truth that is relevant here is truth about the Unknown God, and that implies *revelation* — not man's discovery of God, but God's revelation of himself. The persuasion that we possess such truth may be a delusion, our truth may be unreal; but it must be conceded that this persuasion is the distinction of Christianity. Christianity is not essentially distinguished from other religions as a religion, but from other faiths as a faith. It may be debated whether religion or faith is the more important factor in Christianity, but I suspect that many have not faced this question before they ask, " What is the essence of Christianity? " Therefore they ask amiss, being really desirous of knowing what is its distinctive character, by what differentium it may be recognized as Christianity, and what residium resists solution in the psychological melting pot where all religions are boiled down into one.

William, lately the German Emperor, in one of his praetorian sermons, pilloried the assertion of one of the Mendelsohns that "Judaism is not a religion but a revealed Law." That, however, seems to me a very just appreciation on the part of Mendelsohn, and that it is not uncommon in Israel may be inferred from Zangwill's story of a young soldier who responded to the query what religion he belonged to by asserting, "I belong to no religion, for I am a Jew." I do not agree with the Emperor William that Christianity can claim superiority to Judaism on the score that it is a religion. I would say of Christianity that essentially it is not a religion, but a revealed faith. And for my own part I profess that I belong to no religion (religious man that I am!), but am a believer in Jesus Christ.

So far as I know Ch. Blumhardt is the first Christian in modern times to assert roundly that Christianity is not a religion. I quote from his *Vom Reich Gottes* three decisive affirmations. "Jesus is not the founder of a religion. That is what men have made of

him. He is a life-bringer." "We have no religion, we have only a Christ." "Precisely where Christianity is warmest it seems thinnest. It assumes the character of a religion which we can compare with other religions. But Christ has not introduced a better religion; it is he himself that counts, his Person, Jesus Christ, yesterday, today the same, and forevermore."

When we speak of Christianity as *our* religion we implicitly disparage it. Being *ours,* it is human, the reaction of our psyche — "soulish," that is to say, if we are willing to use St. Paul's humiliating expression ("natural" being the word we commonly prefer to use in 1 Cor.xv.44). *My* religion is only a personal variety of a universal human experience. In this connection we may reflect that in Christianity there are as many varieties of religious experience as there are Christians. But it is instructive only to consider the typical varieties. They are conspicuous. Here in Italy I used to feel offended when simple-minded Catholics spoke of my religion as *other* than theirs, — though they

sometimes flattered me by conceding that it might be a better religion, seeing that the Americans are notoriously a practical and successful people. I think now that this ingenuous expression was precisely the right one. In the matter of religion I am divided from Roman Catholics, but with many of them I feel essentially united because we share the same faith. But the typical varieties of religion are not exhausted by this contrast between Protestantism and Catholicism. And to some degree they overlap denominational boundaries. The Protestant mystic cannot be said to have a different religion from that of the Catholic mystic. And within each of these larger spheres there are varieties conspicuous enough to be marked and named. Both in Catholicism and in Protestantism there is a mystical tendency which contrasts with one more rational. Liberalism and Fundamentalism, though they have first of all to do with the faith, are characterized by a different religiousness. The Methodist experience of religion is studiously bred to type — and it is a type

very remote from Puritan sobriety. Some count it a reproach to the Anglican Churches that they tolerate all manner of religious experiences. But this will not seem so reprehensible when we have put religion in the secondary place where it properly belongs. I feel myself united with all Christians who share the same faith, whatever religious tendencies they may follow, and by whatever ecclesiastical names they are called. I wonder that Islam, in spite of its one faith, is seriously divided by varieties of religious experience, whereas Buddhists are hardly more than distinguished by schools of thought which involve differences of faith.

But we may remember that there is a natural bond of sympathy in sharing the same religion and participating in a familiar cult. The cult is capable of covering a multitude of differences. It is possible to regard religion integrally, making complete abstraction of the various sorts and degrees of faith which are associated with its individual manifestations. The individual religions are then seen to be related as species to their

genus, and one can understand how a globe-trotting philosopher (like Count Keyserling) can find something congenial in every religious expression he encounters. "A touch of nature [human nature!] makes the whole world kin."

Such are some of the amiable attitudes which reward our pains in distinguishing religion from faith. This distinction will not seem questionable or even novel to persons who are acquainted with the German school which calls itself the "Theology of Crisis" — or with Kierkegaard — or with Dostoyewsky.

We use the phrase "*spiritual* religion" with questionable propriety, and commonly without any definite meaning. But if we employ such a term at all we must mean by it something very different from "our" religion, the product of our psyche. In so far as our religion (or, as we had better say, our faith) is not *ours,* not a soulish but a spiritual thing, it is withdrawn from the observation of the psychologist. Still more obvious it is that when we speak of "*revealed* re-

ligion " we must mean something which is absolutely not our own, not strictly therefore a religion, but something which may properly be called Spiritual because it derives from the divine Spirit, is therefore not an expression of self-consciousness in mystical experience, or the creation of our fantastic faculty for mythology and cult. For this reason *revealed* religion is at a discount in an age which is obsessed by psychologism. The religion which can flourish in this atmosphere must be subjective, experimental, mystical — a " revelation " only in the sense that it discloses what is in *man* . . . his utmost depths and heights. Let us concede that this represents man's loftiest experience. Still it is only human, and we properly study it as a part of anthropology. Such a religion can, of course, tolerate no creeds, no institutions which are not psychologically justified, nor even a moral law which is imposed upon men from without and is not simply the expression of the soulish will to self-realization. The divine speaks *in* man but not *to* him — by a feeling, not by the Word of

truth and righteousness. There is no use for the Word when there is no awful distance between God and man. And not only is the authoritative instance beyond man denied, but even the superior instance within him is ignored — the spirit. Naturally, for the spirit cannot be detected by psychological analysis, any more than God by the methods of natural science. "Spirit," says Nietzsche (*Zarathustra* II.), "is the life which cuts athwart life itself." The hand here is the hand of Esau, but the voice is the voice of Jacob — the voice of the Prophets, and particularly of St. Paul, who knew well the sharp conflict of the spirit contending for *its* self-realization, against the soul and the soulishly organized body (1 Cor.xv.44) which he called "the flesh." These two are contrary one to another, and the conflict is waged to the end of the chapter . . . without apparent success (Rom.vii).

The voice of the new religions softly "denies" this conflict. I use the word in the sense of the Christian Scientist, implying that the "denial" because of its softness

effects a compelling suggestion. Dear patient, listen to me: there is no conflict, there is no sin, there is no guilt, for there is no spirit but only soul, and soul is divine. In a sense which Marx did *not* mean it, " Religion *is* an opiate " — an opiate for spiritual pains. In the new religions (including modern interpretations of Christianity) man is denied so high and human an experience as spiritual anguish (Kierkegaard). He is forbidden to feel remorse and despair, and is not encouraged to release this tension by repentence. A man who would claim the privilege of such experiences (on the principle that " nothing human do I count foreign to me ") must withdraw himself from the spell of these religions. So long as he is rendered immune to the shock and deep disturbance of the spiritual, the transcendental, the eternal, he can only seek after " thrills." In so tame a life the spirit is not allowed the consolation of the hope of ultimate triumph, " looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the Day of the Lord " and " the resurrection of the dead." For the new re-

ligions know nothing about a resurrection of the dead and a "spiritual body" — one which is organized by the spirit, as our present body is organized by the soul. They know only (if they know so much) about the immortality of the soul. Always soul, and soul forever! Psychology will prevail also in the other world! Though in fact there is no *other* world, but only a continuation of this. Other-worldliness is at a discount. For just as there is no *distance* between the world and God, so there are no sharp boundaries between this world and the next, no genuine eschatology, no transcendental hope.

"Let us report and celebrate the soul!"

So sang a poet who is no better known than he deserves to be. But his line has haunted me for many years because it expresses perfectly the theme of romanticism.

For my own part, as I have implied above, I choose to judge Christianity by the criterion of *truth* — however dangerous that appeal may be. From that standpoint I feel no embarrassment in conceding that the

newest religions, particularly those characteristic of our present century, may be more religious than Christianity. I remember that the religions which competed with the Church in the decadence of the Roman Empire were all of them more religious than the new faith. Think of the orgiastic worship of the *Magna Mater*, the pomp of Seraphis, which studiously combined the awefulness of all the Egyptian cults (technique of worship!), the suggestive impressiveness of the Mysteries and the grim austerity of the Mythraeum. Even when the Church borrowed the religious technique of its opponents, how pale and superficial the imitation was. What was the Catholic rite of Baptism compared with the Taurobolium? According to the calculations of psychology, paganism ought to have prevailed in this " conflict of religions." But the fact is, there was no conflict of religions. By inventing this phrase we have posed for ourselves an impossible problem. Really, the conflict was between religion and faith. It is not our religion but our faith which overcometh the

world. It is notorious that the various religions did *not* conflict with one another. The same devotee might embrace them all — " pluralizing for power," to use Professor Fowler's phrase. Christianity alone was reproached for its intolerance. That is because it was not so much a religion as a faith. Religions are commonly tolerant because of an obscure awareness that they have their origin in a common religiousness. They have no sharp edges. Islam is an exception because it is grafted upon the stock of Judaism and Christianity.

I am not appalled by Oswald Spengler's prophecy of " The Decay of Western Civilization," because that is a pallid apocalyptic compared with the expectation I was made familiar with in my youth — then rejected (as did all persons of light and leading in my generation), and finally embraced again as good tidings: that " the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burnt up." I confess, however, that one element of Spengler's prognostication is profoundly

distasteful to me: his expectation of a revival of such a religiousness as characterized the decadence of the Roman Empire. A cheap prophecy, I reflect, for it was in large part fulfilled before the prophet lifted up his voice. Everyone remarks upon the religiousness of our time — and wonders that it does not turn out more to the advantage of the Church. Spengler may be right in predicting that what we see now is only a beginning. But we need not be disconsolate. We may trust that faith will again triumph over religion. I am inclined even to welcome the new religions — along with mysticism and romanticism and medievalism and cubism and expressionism and communism — as signs of a rising protest against the smug conventions of the nineteenth century.

De mortibus nihil nisi bonum — but the nineteenth century is not dead except for the minority who are really living in the twentieth. It is the dead hand of the past century which is the formidable foe of Christianity. It is formidable for this very reason that it is not a religion (far from it!)

but a faith, a philosophy, a scientific dogmatism. Secularism is the name we have lately learned to apply to it.

We of the generation that is passing have not been able to say, "today," by reason of our historicism. By reason of "the spirit of self-contained finiteness" (Tillich) we have not been able to say, "forever," to utter the word Eternity, to say "God" — and *mean* God. For we have been accustomed to think only in terms of time — time of vast and indefinite extension, but still only *time*, only temporal, and therefore essentially finite. "A spurious eternity," Haeckel scornfully called it. This indefinite time has no edges, hence no beginning and no ending. Resolutely we were resolved to admit into our religion nothing that is absolutely transcendent — not even a transcendent God. Thus we protected ourselves against shocks from the transcendental and the eternal, remaining secure for a whole generation from the exalting but disturbing experience of "fear and trembling." But the great war and its aftermath of revolutions

provided here in Europe a shock which, though it did not come from beyond the temporal and finite range, shattered men's contentment with the finite and could be regarded as " an intimation of the eternal in the temporal."

This is a turning point which we have not yet reached in America, where the shock was not so profound and the recovery only too rapid. It can hardly be denied that today we are just where we were at the end of the nineteenth century. For us, God's Kingdom is equivalent to man's good works. Our vigorous religious life is absorbed either in interests which are narrowly temporal, such as health and social well-being, or else with the utopia of indefinite progress, which still belongs to time, though it be time raised to the " nth " degree. It is profoundly disparaging to the much lauded historical sense of our generation that it required an " eschatological school " to awaken us to the apprehension that (to use a phrase of Carl Barth's) " a Christianity which is not altogether and utterly eschatological has alto-

gether and utterly nothing to do with Jesus Christ." And how many are yet awake to that?

Few will find fault with me for railing against the nineteenth century, for against the dead hand of that recent past protest is now made on all sides. The protest is louder outside the Church than within it. It is still rather a matter of feeling than of faith. For that reason the protestors of various sorts (in art, literature, philosophy, religion and social science), though they are loosening the soil for new seed, have none to sow in it, are not able to shatter completely the edifice they attack, or even to liberate themselves from thralldom to the spirit of self-contained and self-contented finiteness. It is not the lack of "real religion" which accounts for the futility of their efforts to build a new world. Religion is too subjective a thing to provide a *pou sto* (a fulcrum independent of the world) from which we might move it. What is lacking is a clear faith in the infinite and the transcendental.

When we have made a just distinction be-

tween religion and faith we shall find that it solves many of our little problems, but on the other hand it poses us with a great question which is our personal crisis, What think ye of Christ? That clearly is a question of faith rather than religion. Though that crisis may torment us and though it may offend, it is surely better to face it squarely than to obscure the issue by the irrelevant profession that we are " interested in religion."

Chapter II

A PROFILE OF THE PROTESTANT

I. Introduction

In discoursing lately to children about the significance of their baptism (which is the same thing as to say, the significance of Christianity), I was led to reflect how prominent the *abrenuntio* is — and how triumphantly the Catechism passes over all that, preferring to dwell upon the more positive and pleasing topics of faith and a godly life. It would seem as if the renunciation could be made once for all — and made for us by our sponsors. If the Catechism had been moulded faithfully upon the baptismal vows, it must have given chief attention to the first vow and instilled into the minds of children at a tender age

the necessity of being strong renouncers, protesting not only against the enemy without, but still more sharply against their own tendency to meet the devil half way. I am aware that this attitude of protest, because it is negative, is now commonly disparaged. It is a popular theory of education that children (as well as adults) should be encouraged in every sort of self-expression. I agree that the attitude of protest is not a charming one. And yet (Christian or no Christian) it may be a necessary attitude for man, if he would conserve the dignity of his manhood. For the Christian, this question is not doubtful, inasmuch as the sternest self-renunciation is required in the New Testament — by Jesus himself as well as by his Apostles. In modern times the most thoroughgoing exemplars of this attitude called themselves "Protestants."

2. It may be profitable for us therefore to picture this type. To picture it justly we must revert to historical examples. For today not many of those who call themselves Protestants will boast that they are true

to type. When I name in one breath such outstanding examples as Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Knox, John Bunyan, and Jonathan Edwards you get a composite impression of the type and will recognize what a sorry figure the Protestant is — from an aesthetic point of view. An artist could not use any of these heroes as models for Greek gods. Phrases which Isaiah uses to describe "the Servant of Jahve" have been applied to Jesus with doubtful propriety, but very appropriately they describe the genuine Protestant — "there is no beauty that we should desire him . . . his visage was so marred more than any man." These phrases apply also very well to the ancient Prophets — and hardly less aptly to some of the Apostles of our Lord. St. Paul was such a figure. We cannot be so sure about St. Peter, for he is commonly pictured as rather sleek and well-liking. However, an early baroque sculptor, whose work I often see as I enter the Porta del Popolo, has represented both these princes of the Apostles as Protestants. Both of them are unlovely figures,

with wild gestures, who scream their warning against the world the flesh and the devil to all who come on business or pleasure to the Holy City. I have come to think that this may represent an attitude which is very necessary to the Christian and characterizes him more completely than do any of his positive qualities.

The attitude of the Protestant of old time, if it was not *necessary,* was not excusable. A protest which is not necessary to the Christian as such is not tolerable in the Protestant. In our day nothing could be more ridiculous than a protest levelled against the sixteenth century. We can feel nothing but contempt for the "Protestants" who (to use St. Paul's phrase in 1 Cor.ix.26) are "punching the air." That is emphatically *not* what the Reformers were doing. Luther's first protest was against the sale of indulgences. Indulgences are still sold, but for so small a price that the practice can no longer be regarded as an iniquity. It is not even a profitable business, it is only an absurdity. We must remember, too, that

the original Protestant was protesting against the abuses of his own Church. The modern Protestant who directs his protest against a Church from which he is separated only wastes his breath, — if he is not also making an exhibition of his ignorance and pride and prejudice. For us, the only necessary protest is against our own Church, and that will hardly be fruitful unless it is addressed to ourselves.

For the purpose of this historical study it is impertinent to enquire whether there exist today any genuine examples of Protestantism. I am far from claiming that I am one, in the sense in which I am about to define the name. I would as soon profess and call myself a Christian — in such times as these, when there is no danger of being thrown to the lions.

Those who dislike the name may find their prejudice strengthened when I proceed to define the Protestant, predominantly with a view to his negative characteristics, as *radically irreligious,* and, coming to his positive traits, find nothing to distinguish

him from other Christians but his *radical worldliness.*

II. Radical Irreligiousness

1. The Protestant being notoriously a person who is zealous for God, whose protest is directed especially against those things in which he suspects a tendency (which he knows well in his own heart) to encroach upon the divine prerogatives and snatch from God a part of his glory, — the Protestant being such a character, you may suspect that I am vainly plaguing you with a paradox when I assert that his *radical irreligiousness* is his most prominent distinction. It is clear that we cannot attribute to him that sort of irreligiousness which is characteristic of the man who revolts against God, or the worse sort which treats God with indifference, or even the nobler irreligiousness of honest doubt. But I have in mind something more " radical " than that. You may be inclined to think that we have just now considered and rejected all the

possible forms of irreligiousness, and that the most radical form conceivable is the irreligiousness of the atheist, — if we can imagine to ourselves an atheist who treasures no little superstitions. You may be ready to affirm, then, that the Protestant, because his motto is, *Deo omnia gloria,* must be accounted the most religious of men. If you assert this, I cannot deny it; for our dispute becomes merely a question about words. But I can ask you to reflect that this is not what you commonly mean by religion. You commonly understand by religion all the methods man has devised to develop a sense of the divine presence, to display a ceremonial reverence, and to propitiate God's favor. In that sense of the word we can say that Hindus and Moslems and Buddhists are more *religious* than Christians. That, in fact, is what our travelers are always telling us. And they count it superfluous to enquire *what* God these exemplary pagans are worshipping — what gods or devils they ascribe glory to. Using the word in this sense, you will readily concede that the Catholic (I

am not thinking of the Roman Catholic exclusively) is more religious than the modern Protestant, and that the modern Protestant (with his "methods" of inducing religious experience, his "interest" in mysticism, his psychological "technic of worship," and all that sort of thing) is more religious than the ancient type. Clearly so. For we have only to observe what the real Protestant did to the religion he found prevailing. He desired to make a clean sweep of it — "root and branch," he said. What he actually did was surely radical enough, though in some instances he was more radical in what he said than in what he did. Considering what he purposed to do as well as what he historically accomplished, it is not unfair to say that the typical Protestant, not content with casting away his own amulets and images (that is, the hooks upon which men are accustomed to hang their "personal" religion), proceeded to pull down the main props of the Tower of Babel. Holy vestments, holy ritual, holy Altar and holy Temple went by the board. There were no

holy priests left any more, nor (except in the perversions of Puritanism and Methodism) were there any holy laity — any "good" men. Only mere man, on the one side, — and on the other, one Lord most holy, God most mighty, a holy and merciful Saviour. Between God and man no intermediary but the God-Man, no prescribed ritual of approach, and no vestige left of a holy Church visible and tangible here upon earth. For the "meeting-house" is essentially not a consecrated material edifice, but a mere *place*, a sacred opportunity of *meeting* . . . with God!

That is what I call radical irreligiousness. If you prefer to call it religion, I have no quarrel with you. Only you cannot use the word in this sense and apply it also to the universal and all-too-human effort to propitiate God by ritual performance or by meritorious piety. From Robert Browning's "Caliban upon Setebos" we can learn what "natural religion" is, and Thornton Wilder, depicting the worship of "the great God Lilly" (which is only the figure-head of a

wrecked ship), makes plain to us how pitifully natural it is — not to primitive man only, but to *man* absolutely.

2. You may suspect that when I describe the Protestant as radically irreligious I am preparing to claim for him some other sort of superiority which would offset this defect. You may expect me to represent that *instead* of religion his *forte* is morality. That is a favorite antithesis of ours, but it is drawn with doubtful propriety. For are not "good works" a principal part of all religiousness? Speaking of the typical Protestant, I might rather insist upon his radical immorality. That is, in fact, the charge which has commonly been made against him by Catholics, — as it was made against the early Christians by pagan philosophers (Celsus *e.g.*), and against Jesus by Jewish rabbis. I say with emphasis "radical" immorality; for complaint was not made so much against the tenor of these men's lives, or against occasional lapses into sin, as against the *principle* upon which they presumed to act. Luther would hardly have been regarded as an im-

moral man, if he had not said such radical things as *Pecca fortiter*, and Jesus' custom of eating with publicans and sinners would not have sufficed to condemn him, if he had not been so radical as to *forgive* them. How could I describe the Protestant as a " good " man when he makes it evident that this is the last thing he would claim for himself?

So long as I am dwelling upon the negative traits of the Protestant it cannot be supposed that I am trying to depict him as a superior man, or even as a particular sort of man. We are viewing him now as a man who has stripped himself of every proud distinction, till he sees himself as a mere man, a human man. Thus it is we must see him, if we see him aright. He has not only cast aside the glamorous delusions with which the religious man seeks to cloak himself from his own eyes and from the eyes of God, but he has also stripped himself of the more essential garments which *culture* weaves " to hide us from our proper shame." Notoriously he is *Kulturfeindlich* — hostile particularly to those things which the pro-

fessors of culture for culture's sake prize the most highly. We have seen that he is not an aesthetic figure. Neither is he interested in aesthetics. (Milton is hardly an exception, and Kierkegaard expressly repudiated his aesthetic writings. Oscar Wilde was evidently predestined to be a Catholic.)

I must depict the Protestant, then, as he saw himself, standing naked before his God — an unlovely figure, as he appears also to himself to be. Not like Adam in the days of his innocence, but naked and *ashamed*. For he cannot stand thus naked under the eye of God without knowing that he is a creature and remembering that neither in his conduct nor in his estimation of himself has he played this part. St. Paul does not state the case against men at its worst when he says (Rom.1.21,25) "that knowing God they glorified him not as God . . . but worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator." Man discovers his deepest guilt in the fact that he has presumed to be himself a little god. What else do we mean

when we conceive that we are independent and autonomous beings, capable of legislating for ourselves by means of our own conscience, recognizing no "chief end" but self-realization, and refusing to acknowledge any authority over us? I do not intend to enlarge here upon this theme. Permit me only to express with the utmost earnestness my conviction that our pretention to be gods (not the creatures of God) accounts for the prevailing delusion that by the technique of modern culture we are building a Kingdom of God on earth — whereas, in fact, all we are able to build is a Tower of Babel. No one is more ready than the modern man to agree that our theology is an absurdity. But he fails to reflect that what has made it incredible, and also superfluous, is a fantastic anthropology, our exorbitant conception of man.

3. Such delusions are bound to vanish when we stand in the place where the Protestant finds himself. Describing the Protestant negatively, I have not yet got so far as to picture to you what he *is*, but even

now I can indicate the *place* where he stands and make clear to you why he stands there naked. I speak of him as "standing," not because his radical irreligiousness forbids him to kneel, but rather to indicate that, whether he be sitting or going, the experience which that place affords is bound to "bring him up standing." For what alone characterizes that place is the apprehension of an authentic word of God. It is a word which comes not to the Protestant alone, but to every man — not only to the privileged few who can boast of a religious disposition or a mystical temperament, but to all men absolutely, "whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear." When God says to us, "Thou shalt," we cannot plausibly confound this voice with our own conscience (the sovereign self legislating for itself), for it only too manifestly cuts athwart our life and denies the absolute validity of the instinct of self-preservation and self-realization. We perceive that this voice is outside of us because it is against us (as all voices other than our own are); and be-

cause it is authoritative we know that it is above us. It can be nothing else but the voice of God, our Creator. Hearing that voice, we know that we are creatures. In that moment only are we able to conceive of God as Creator, — however readily we recite the Creed. In that place, too, we know that we are sinners, because we are aware that we have not comported ourselves as creatures, and that by inverting our real relationship with the Creator we have perverted the whole creation.

But the commandment more specifically condemns us because it assumes that we are what we are not and exacts of us what, as we must confess with shame, we are incapable of doing. It says: " Be ye holy, for I am holy "; " be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." This is, in effect, the most devastating condemnation. It condemns us not for what we do or fail to do, but for what we *are*. And under the eye of God it is vain for us to appeal to our impotence as an extenuating circumstance, — as though we might convict God of a mis-

take in reckoning us to be better than we are!

It must be admitted that what has just been said does not apply to the Protestant any more than to the Catholic. And, indeed, how many who are not Christians have stood, at least once, in that place! Baudelaire's prayer (perhaps his only one) was the petition, " O Lord, give me strength and courage to contemplate my own body and my own heart without disgust." Peculiar to the Protestant is only his strange resolution to *stay* in that place. A strange resolution, because that is not a convenient place to stay in, under the heavy condemnation of God. Yet the Protestant directs the whole strength of his protest against everything that might tend to remove him from that place. It must be directed principally against himself and the tendencies which operate within him to prompt a hasty escape. For the temptation is strong because escape is easy. One has only to refuse to heed the commandment, and his back is turned upon that place forever. But that is not the way of

escape which is alluring to the Christian. For him the temptation is specious to step briskly away from that spot with the proud intention of *performing* the commandment — becoming perfect, becoming holy! With such literal "obedience" a man inverts again the relation of creature and Creator; the whole universe again appears to him in a false light, and he himself is again profoundly alienated from God. He is no longer naked, but clothed in his own righteousness.

First of all, it is *for the truth's sake* that the Protestant resolves to stay in this place where the standing is so uncomfortable and so insecure. For it is only in this place he can know himself for what he truly is, and the world for what it is: himself as a sinful creature, and the world as a fallen world. The Protestant would rather see things as they are than enjoy the glamour of an idealistic illusion. He is the last person to be accused of "the will to believe," which William James discovers at the bottom of all religion. Some will consider this the least becoming attitude of the Protestant, though

they can hardly deny to it an element of heroism.

But we must not suppose that the Protestant is merely compelled to stay in that place against his will; he is also attracted and spellbound there by a most potent spell — the Gospel. He speaks of this place in Old Testament language as the "place beneath the Mercy Seat," because he is convinced that only there *grace* is to be found. For grace cannot be conceived of as grace (that is, as sheer bounty and loving-kindness) except with relation to a sinner who is unable to save himself. (Others who do *not* stand in that place regard grace proudly as an infusion of the divine nature.) Here is the reason why the Protestant counts that he cannot protest too much against every thing, within him and without, which might tempt him to desert that place, to ignore, or to cloak again, the sin he has just confessed, to climb again "out of the deep" where he has seen himself as he is and the world as it is, in order to scale again the height from which he can "see all the kingdoms of the

world and the glory of them," and can conceive himself worthy to possess all this.

There is a presentiment of the Gospel in the very commandment itself. The very commandment which condemns him implies a judgment incredibly flattering to man. We might almost interpret it as the sharp accolade with which a sovereign advertises a man of his nobility. For the commandment, "Be ye holy, be ye perfect," implies a judgment incredibly flattering to man. God speaks to us *as if* we were gods, or had at least something divine about us, so that we might be capable of being perfect and holy. That agrees so closely with our guiltiest ambition that we cannot reject it as an indication of what we "existentially" are (to use a Barthian word), even when it involves an intolerable accusation against us for what we are phenomenally. And yet we can hardly accept it. We can only say that the Creator who is able to "call the things which are not" and make them more real than the things which are, must be capable of making us to be what he assumes us to

be — even when he says, "Ye are gods!" It is not that thought, however, which has commonly comforted the Protestant. It is rather St. Paul's thought of God's forensic judgment, pronouncing us righteous while we are evidently sinners. Our generation scoffs at that thought; but I am unable to see why sinful men should want more comfort than the assurance that the most worthy Judge Eternal is disposed to treat us *as if* we were righteous. That, however, if it is a "legalistic" thought, is clearly not constructed out of the Law. If the Law were God's last word to man, we should have scanty ground for confidence. "But the Law was a tutor to lead us to Christ."

It is commonly supposed that the Protestant made more of the Old Testament than of the New, more of the Law than of the Gospel. But we can hardly conceive that to be true of the genuine and exemplary Protestant. For it is incredible that he could stay all his life long *in that place,* under the thunder of the Law, if he did not "hear a deeper voice across the storm." He might

with more justice retort upon us that *we* do not hear the full voice of the Gospel. For the Protestant heard more than we do in God's last and clearest, his most intelligible and unequivocal word to man: the Word *Christ-Jesus*. He heard two notes in it, one of which we are fain to ignore. To him it was a word of crisis and condemnation as well as a word of justification. It was a word of double meaning for him, and yet it was unequivocal because it had both meanings at the same time. " Christ died for our sins and rose again for our justification." And in the days of his flesh he exacted repentance in the same breath with which he proclaimed the Kingdom of God. We are foolishly proud of our incapacity to hear in this word any note but the note of grace. But " grace " is a meaningless sound except as it follows upon and resolves the strident dissonance of sin. We say, " the Law came by Moses — grace and truth by Jesus Christ." Very true, but he who was the Truth insisted upon the Law: " Thou knowest the Commandments: this do and thou

shalt live." Hence it is only in *this place* which we have been talking about that the word Jesus-Christ is a fully intelligible word. But such a word as this (the assurance that we are what we are not), though it were never so intelligible, would not be convincing, if like all other words it were merely a vibration in the air. To one who is *not* standing in "that place" the "grace of God" is only a matter of course and therefore is no grace; whereas *in that place* where alone it is significant it sounds incredible. Therefore this "Word of God had flesh and wrought with human hands the creed of creeds."

Moreover this word was uttered with a particular accent which indicates the spot where we are expected to stay. It is the same spot where God's first word found us and convicted us. But now we learn to our comfort that to *stay* there is our *imitatio Christi* — the only imitation that is required of us or is in any wise possible. It is only Christ's "meekness" we are expected to imitate. Of that he gave us a stupendous

example. He who was in the form of God (as we are not) did not (as we do) count it a thing to be grasped at to be on an equality with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death (man's last ignominy, and that in its most shameful form), the death on the cross. By that stupendous example he points us to the spot where we are expected to *stay* — till God raises us up, " as Christ also was raised to the Glory of God." We may well be fearful of leaving that spot, lest God fail to find us when he comes to raise us up. Even Christ did not raise himself, he was " raised " from the dead.

We are aware now that the *place* we have been talking about for such a long time is at the foot of the Cross. There is something very peculiar about the Protestant's attitude with respect to the Cross. Though he clings so tenaciously to the Cross and shows that he makes more of it than any

other man, and though he is bold enough to affirm that "through Christ Jesus the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world," he is reluctant to indicate this by the facile gesture of crossing himself and afraid to use the Cross as an ornament, even upon his churches. This is one of the traits of his radical irreligiousness.

III. Radical Worldliness

1. Even if you have followed with patience the foregoing disquisition upon the negative aspect of the Protestant, even if you are convinced now that it was not a vain use of paradox to describe him as radically irreligious (this man who makes so much of God and of Christ and of the Cross!), it is only too likely that you will be offended when I propose to you a new paradox and ask you to regard this man (a man who is "crucified unto the world!") as *radically worldly*, assert in fact that this quality is so characteristic that it goes further than any other to distinguish him, with

a view especially to his positive and active traits, from all other sorts of Christians. I am confident, however, that this assertion will not long seem paradoxical to you. The phrase is not so novel that I can claim credit for its invention. I derive this, and much else that I am writing here, from Friederich Gogarten. And, substantially, what is affirmed here is evident and notorious. Recently, attention has been sharply focussed upon this paradox by the thesis of Max Weber, that capitalism — a feature so characteristic of modern worldliness! — is a product of Calvinism. But if we do not pretend to see so deeply into the millstone, even a superficial view might suggest to us the suspicion that between the Protestant and the world in which he lives there must be a radical solidarity to account for his conspicuous success in dealing with it. We have only to think of the unquestionable predominance of the Protestant in the world of the nineteenth century — in learning, science and invention; in war, politics and business, — that is to say, precisely in respect to those

factors which loom largest in our picture of the world. It seems as if the Protestant had discovered how to conform triumphantly to the Apostolic injunction "to *use* the world as not abusing it." Others may well be curious to learn his secret.

2. We cannot expect to find this secret anywhere in the neighborhood of the worldliness which denies God or ignores him; and here it would be the height of absurdity to understand the word in the sense we attribute to it when we describe the man or woman who is conspicuous in a fashionable coterie. And there are more radical sorts of worldliness which we must discard when we are speaking of the Protestant. If we were accustomed to use this word significantly, we would call those men pre-eminently worldlings who are content with the aesthetic pleasure which they derive from the contemplation of the world, and still more emphatically, those idealists who find a religious satisfaction in this world and regard it as a clear revelation of the Most High God. But as the Protestant is neither aesthetical

nor religious, we cannot attribute such delusions to him.

We may wonder if there is any other sense (in particular any more radical sense) in which we might properly employ the word worldliness. Yet this is implied in the common observation that in some sense the Catholic is less worldly than the Protestant. It is often said in disparagement of Protestantism that it does not produce "saints." We have already seen one reason for this: the Protestant is too radically irreligious to become a saint. He has ceased to be a Protestant when he has started to "climb the steep ascent to heaven." But there is another reason. Saintliness has a negative side, the characteristic *contemptus mundi,* which implies a proud detachment from this miserable and naughty world; and it is chiefly by his radical worldliness that the Protestant is deterred from becoming a Catholic saint, — or, indeed, any sort of ascetic monk or nun. We must enquire now how that is.

In this search we must delve deep and

seek for something very "radical," if we are to discover the trait which characterizes the whole tenor of the Protestant's active life. Possibly it is so radical that we cannot even conceive of it from the position where *we* stand. We have to recall where it is the Protestant stands, and in imagination at least we must put ourselves in his place. From that spot where the Protestant stands the world is seen *as it is;* it is known to be the creature of God, and therefore unable to escape from him, however it may rebel. But at the same time the Protestant sees himself as he is — as a mere man, a human man — and has to recognize his entire solidarity with the world. He is "of the earth earthy." The world and man lie both of them under God's condemnation and are both waiting for their redemption, both being every way — as condemned and as redeemed — God's man and God's world.

Having this sense of solidarity with the world, the Protestant knows that he cannot separate himself from it and that it would be absurd and presumptuous to make the

attempt. All his illusions about man and the world being brushed away, he can no longer delude himself with the notion that he might (if he would) become a saint or make this world a paradise. "Can an Etheopian change his skin or a leopard his spots?" Knowing that the world is simply world and that man is man, he knows that the whole material universe (including man and his world) must be dealt with in accordance with its own laws and with methods which are appropriate to *it* — not with methods which might conceivably be appropriate to a spiritual world. This radical realism supplies him with a strong motive to investigate these laws and to discover appropriate methods of dealing with this world in its physical, biological and human aspects. He does this humanly and naturally, simply with an aim at practical results — not as a religious employment — and therefore without the illusion that he might possibly discover the ultimate ground and reason of things. His radical irreligiousness saves him from that delusion. He recognizes, in fact,

no distinction between sacred actions and secular, between holy professions and profane. In spite of the violent contrasts which emerge here, as between good and evil, truth and falsehood, the Protestant soberly recognizes that this great round world cannot be divided into two halves, a secular and a holy. He knows that not even little fragments can be separated from the mass and made into holy Churches or tiny Kingdoms of God upon earth. He is not even inclined to distinguish his actions with respect to the sphere in which they are performed, as though in one sphere they might be regarded as profane, whereas in another sphere (on Sundays and in Church) they might be accounted holy. Indeed he shocks our ears by his asseveration that *all* his actions, even when they are conformed to an ethical norm, cannot be anything but sinful. Even if we reject this strange opinion of his with abhorrence, we cannot fail to perceive that it exceedingly simplifies his practical problem. He is not puzzled, as we are, to determine what actions are worldly (and there-

fore to be shunned), and which are unworldly (and therefore may safely be allowed); for he knows that *all* his actions are necessarily worldly. Yet this judgment does not in the least incline him to withhold his hands from every work and to fold them in idleness, for his sense of solidarity with the world prohibits the proud thought that he could be defiled by contact with it. More positively, the feeling that this is *his* world provides the impulse to work on it and in it. And he finds a still stronger encouragement in the thought that this world, in spite of every appearance to the contrary, remains God's world and is waiting, just as he is, for its regeneration. In that thought he discovers a consecration of his secular endeavors — *all* of them, and not one more than another. This is the secret of the Protestant's tireless activity, which is one of the most obvious reasons of his success in dealing with the world. He is "diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord," — and not serving God less really in his secular occupation than in an ecclesiastical. Here

we encounter his peculiar notion of a secular "calling." The secular work which he finds himself "called" to engage in he feels that he must do zealously "as for God's laws." (This peculiar notion is inscribed in our Catechism.) He refuses to regard a religious profession as more sacred; and though he is ready to concede that it is no less sacred, his radical worldliness prompts him to enquire if it is as *necessary*. Luther affirmed that all the nuns in Christendom were not doing anything more sacred than the mothers who were engaged in washing and spanking their babies.

But I have yet to elucidate a more fundamental cause of the Protestant's success in this world. I have remarked upon the motive which leads him to investigate the laws which actually govern this world and to apply the methods which are appropriate for its exploitation. He was not the first to undertake this search, and it cannot be an accident that he was the first to accomplish it with conspicuous success. The fact is that he was the first to stand in a position where

the real world could be viewed and investigated with an eye freed from the prejudices of idealism and religion. He was not deflected from his search by " the fear that the world might turn out to be bad " — for he already knew that it was. If all the scientists of today were unchristian or antichristian, it would remain none the less true that modern science was the creation of the Protestant; for there was no one else who could have led the way.

And the laws which the Protestant discovered he resolutely applied for the exploitation of the world. He could devote himself to this task without embarrassment because, as we have already seen, he made no distinctions between secular and sacred callings — or even between noble and ignoble professions, coarse work or refined. All was done in dust and dirt, and yet it could be done with the whole heart because it was a divine calling.

In view of these considerations we cannot regard it as accidental that in the course of a few generations every Protestant na-

tion was strong and prosperous, whereas every pagan and Catholic nation in all the world remained weak and impoverished. The significance of this fact is not altered in the least by the observation that Jewish enclaves in Protestant lands learned how to exploit the exploiter, and that pagan as well as Catholic peoples have learned to follow his lead.

3. I remember that as a boy, when my father pointed proudly to these contrasts, I was perplexed how to reconcile the Protestant's worldly success with the precepts and ideals of the Gospel. I am not at all inclined to boast of it now, for to me it serves to make manifest the peculiar peril the Protestant incurs by reason of his radical irreligiousness on the one hand and his radical worldliness on the other. The Calvinist will hardly view with complacency the proofs that capitalism is the product of his theology. And in general, the Protestant cannot contemplate without shame the colossal results of his success. He must view with misgiving the mechanization of human life,

which tends only too evidently to suppress the only value which lends this world significance. It is certain that the Protestant did not foresee anything of the sort when he began his exploitation of the material world. And we may believe that things would never have come to such a pass, if the Protestant had not ceased to be a Christian. For, absurd as it may seem, we have the clearest evidence that one may cease to be a Christian while still remaining a Protestant and we may even suspect that this movement has been proceeding on a vast scale, though by imperceptible degrees.

It is evident, at all events, that the Protestant walks on a narrow *arête*, with a dreadful abyss on either side. It is a dizzy position, where no man can be confident of maintaining his equilibrium. On the one hand the Protestant is in danger of not keeping his worldliness *radical* enough. It may easily slip into the superficial worldliness which is content to contrive its music from the world's groans. On the other hand, his radical irreligiousness may slip imperceptibly

bly into the vulgar irreligiousness which is nothing else but forgetfulness of God. Against such dangers the Protestant is almost totally undefended. His only help is God. The Catholic, and every other religious man, is helped by pious practices to maintain his balance. It is true that the Protestant, like other men, has customs of prayer and churchgoing; but as he is not permitted to regard them as meritorious, and they lose all significance for him so soon as he has moved away from the place where we have seen him standing. It is true that the Protestant has *faith*, and it is notorious that he makes much of it; but he does not boast of it, because he has to confess that it is " not his own, it is the gift of God." As such, it is not a thing which he inalienably *possesses*, — like a *creed*, " a form of sound words," to which he might cling in any emergency. His is the great faith that " all things are possible with God." That would seem to be enough to raise him up from any moral fall. Mk.x.27. But from *one* fall it cannot rescue him: *viz.* the only too com-

mon case when "man falls upward." That is the presumptuous fall which expresses itself in the conviction that "all things are possible with *man*" — and proceeds to imagine eschatologies which are appropriate to this faith, the many Towers of Babel we are now engaged in building, nowhere so zealously as in America. It cannot be regarded as an accident that this building, whether in actuality or in imagination, proceeds most rapidly in America. For though the Protestant's faith can last only so long as he stands in his *place,* under the eye of God, where he knows himself to be a sinful creature saved by grace, it has effects which go on automatically, namely, habits of work and the habit of eschatology. Even the presumptuous Protestant will not regard his "good works" as meritorious, but he is capable of a greater presumption in regarding them as *efficacious* for the making of a perfect world. He presumes not only to save himself by his good works but to save the world. Such builders, since they cannot otherwise be checked, God must disperse by

the confusion of tongues, — which already we hear.

The perilous path of the Protestant is like Zarathustra's " Bridge of the Separator " — a way so narrow that only perfectly balanced souls can pass over it without toppling into the lake of molten metal.

I have depicted to you the Protestant as a mere human man, and then as a man in desperate danger, hardly able to stand upright on the precarious ground he has chosen. He would be a pitiable spectacle indeed, if God were not " able to make him stand."

Chapter III

A PROFILE OF THE CATHOLIC

It is with a glad sense of relief I turn away from the Protestant, as he has just been delineated, and essay to describe the Catholic. The contrast is so immense that one may well wonder if (or how) two such opposite terms can be included under the general name of Christian. Can one with equal justification speak of a Christian Protestant and Catholic Christian? If this is possible, it leads to a conclusion which is unfamiliar. If the same identical person, all in one breath, can use both of these terms with a full apprehension of their meaning, that is to say, if he can tolerate both of these contrasts within Christendom, he can tolerate them also within himself, and may find them both involved at the same time in his own experi-

ence. That would mean the reconciliation of the deepest dissonances in the Church of God.

The reader will not have failed to note that the tragic figure of the Protestant was described with intimate sympathy, and perhaps he may have divined that under the cover of this much maligned name (that is to say, with a touch of irony) were delineated the traits which are most fundamentally characteristic of the Christian. He may have observed that, if I declined to call myself a Protestant, it was only because I have a feeling of awful reverence for the incredible figure I was describing. I say "incredible figure," but might we not as well say *impossible*? Think of the lonely man we depicted, struggling to stand on the icy *arête* between two precipices! He is lonely, not only because he is essentially remote from his kind, but because he is on no terms of society with his Unknown God. He will not presume to *know* God, because any human comparison, however much it might be exalted, would belittle the Deity; he can

hardly hold converse with his God in prayer, for remembering that God is in heaven and he on earth, he knows that his words should be few (Eccl.v.2); and he ventures with diffidence to love God when he reflects that the most exalted human love is sublimated *Eros*. If we make bold to call God " Father," we use a word which is full of Eros. We are on the brink of idolatry! I have hinted that this lonely figure is supported in his perilous position by God's grace. And yet hardly that, for (as I have described him, with evident exaggeration) the Protestant in his great humility expects grace to follow his fall rather than " prevent " it, thinks of God as competent to forgive the sinner but hardly to save him from sinning.

I can raise no objection, if you affirm that I have delineated an impossible figure, or at least an ideal which has never yet been incorporated in flesh and blood. Yet it may be said that we have given a true, instantaneous picture in profile of an attitude which is not uncommon to Christians, but which no man, whatever he might purpose

in his heart, has ever been able to maintain, — for the simple reason that he is a *man*. "A mere human man," we have said. But that is what the Catholic says of himself, only with a different accent: *nihil humani a me alienum puto* (I count nothing human alien to me). He may mean that boastfully, but also he may mean it humbly, —

Nor seek to wind himself too high
For mortal man beneath the sky.

Recognizing that "man is a religious animal," he is not so presumptuous as to suppose that he could supersede the human necessity of reacting *religiously* to the numinous experience of the Unknown God.

I feel competent to depict the Catholic type of Christian, because there is nothing to deter me from identifying myself with the figure I describe. It is not presumptuous for one to assert that he is a Catholic. For if the ideal of the Protestant is man's impossible possibility, so that we must refer to history for illuminating examples of the type, the Catholic, on the other hand, is all-

too-possible. That is proved not only by the fact that there are immense numbers of Catholics in the world, but still more clearly by the fact that there are so many " good " Catholics. Who ever heard speak of a " good Protestant "?

When I say that I am a Catholic I conceive that I am not making a boast but a confession. Yet in a sense it is a proud confession, for though it claims the possession of only human qualities, it implies a fulness of the very highest human qualities, —religious and moral and cultural. I have had to describe the Protestant chiefly in negative terms, but now we have nothing but positive traits to deal with when we picture the Catholic.

And what a variety of them! Religion, of course, comes first in importance. I have said a great deal in disparagement of religion. But all this was said only with respect to its absolute worth, as a presumptive means of attaining salvation. Considering it with relation to other human qualities, I am eager to concede that it is the highest, the

very tip-top of human endeavor to reach after God, — though it may never attain its aim. We cannot rank morality higher when we reflect that without religion it lacks its only effective and intelligible sanction. As for the arts, which are the highest exponents of culture, we must remember that they have never greatly flourished except as the handmaids of religion. Catholicism can boast that it conserves all these great human values. But this it does as a religion, and just in the same wise as other religions have done before it.

Instead of a pitiable naked figure, we see, then, the Catholic clothed in the dignity of his religion. That is not merely the supreme but the only real dignity. For even to parents and paramount chieftains and kings, if they possess not that halo, no one pays reverence, but only civil respect. The Catholic is religious — and doesn't care who knows it. He is not ashamed of his religion, as the Protestant is, and neither does he entertain the suspicion that he could possibly have too much of it. Nothing that is re-

ligious is alien to him. I am thinking now of the out and out Catholic, who has within him no protesting monitor to criticise his religiousness and has learned to ignore the austere traditions of primitive Christianity. This is the typical, the characteristic Catholic, who is willing to adopt any religious practice, if only it "works," that is to say, avails to induce a religious experience, or to express it, or to maintain it.

In contrast to the lonely figure of the Protestant as he has just been described, the Catholic is cheered and sustained on all sides by a society, the Church, which is at once natural and supernatural, militant and triumphant, a communion of men, but also a "communion of saints," having intercourse also with angels. I am not enough of a Protestant to ignore this comfort. Even Calvin repeated the old saying, "He who has not the Church for his Mother cannot have God for his Father." The Protestant does not essay to get along without a Church, but the difference is that he feels free to criticise it, disparaging it as a "visible

Church," and in his greatest extremities prefers to be alone with God.

But for the Catholic, the Church is not merely a society, it is a sacramental organism of divine grace. The Sacraments are not only symbols but effectual pledges of God's unmerited favor, — they can even be regarded as channels of grace. They actually confer what they signify. And in no case can the Catholic appeal more triumphantly to the Scriptures — to the very Gospels themselves — for the vindication of his position. This is so clear that the sacramental character of Christianity is duly acknowledged in the most important of the Protestant " confessions." It is only in *practice* that the sacraments are ignored. But it is only in practice that they have any importance; and the " Evangelical " must admit that in the exaltation of the Eucharist the Catholic is more evangelical than he. The anxious Protestant we have been contemplating evidently needs nothing so much as the sacrament of penance, — which indeed is not meant to delude him with the notion that

he is no longer a sinner, but to assure him that he is saved in spite of his human infirmity.

It may be thought superfluous to remark that the Catholic is clothed not only with the dignity of religion but with the respectability of morality. All religions, even the most primitive and abject, prescribe rules of conduct which are regarded as moral codes. This therefore does not distinguish the Catholic from other religious men; but it sharply distinguishes him from the Protestant whom we have just described as an immoralist. In its earliest phase Catholicism left behind it the immoralism of the New Testament. The Gospel became a New Law. The Catholic confesses himself a sinner, yet indulges the belief that merit can be won, not only by pious practices, but by good works. Only lax Protestants slump into this position. And must we not use the name ex-Protestant for the many among us who are sheer moralists and exalt good works without any reference to faith or religion?

The ex-Protestant is inclined to account

only those works *good* which are justified on utilitarian grounds, as contributing to the greatest good of the greatest number. That has produced a Philistine culture. But the Catholic, by reason of his religiousness, is clothed in all the glamour of romantic culture. Philosophy and all the arts — rhetoric, architecture, sculpture, painting and music — were regarded at first with suspicion, because they were in the service of hostile religions. But so soon as the Church was in a position to *possess* them, they were welcomed without reserve. They long ago escaped her control. But ex-Catholics — romantics without religion — have proved capable of producing only a bohemian culture, while art in the Church remains weakly archaistic. The Church is impoverished by the exclusion of her romantic members, but they in turn are incomplete beings without religion. They were made for the Church and find no rest until they return to it. The Church possesses the True, the Beautiful and the Good. How could any one be ashamed to call himself a Catholic?

If it does not seem presumptuous of one to claim to be a Catholic when nominally he is a Protestant and betrays his sympathy with that impossible position, he may be charged at least with consistency. It is true that I have not always spoken dispitefully of religion. In a book entitled " Problems of Church Unity " I urged that if the divided Churches are ever to unite, they must unite on the Catholic cult. Recently I was responsible for the publication in Italy of Rudolf Otto's work, " Il Sacro," — and now it may appear that I have gone over to the enemy when I describe appreciatively the typical Protestant in language which savors of Karl Barth and the " Theology of Crisis."

But it may be possible to make it appear that the opposed attitudes we have just been considering can be reconciled without absurdity. Fundamentally, the question is whether religion (in the sense I have here been using the word) can be reconciled with faith. But, as a matter of fact, these two things have always been so closely associated that it is difficult for us now even to dis-

criminate them as distinctive factors. And the same thing is true (although it is not so evident) of Catholicism and Protestantism. We think of them as antithetical terms; but, after all, they are antitheses *within* Christendom. If they are distinguished here more sharply than is usual, this was only for the sake of keeping our categories pure. Viewing the matter historically and concretely, it is evident that Protestantism has never existed without some Catholic elements, and we may suspect that a Protestant spirit is not rare in Catholics. If this is the rule rather than an exception, it cannot lightly be asserted that the synthesis of Catholic and Protestant is an equivocation, a weak compromise, or an absurdity. And the rare individual who *recognizes* what diverse elements unite to compose his Christianity is surely in no more contemptible a plight than the many who make no such analysis. The original Reformers — Luther, Calvin and all the rest of them — were *Catholic* Reformers. They had no notion of abolishing Catholicism *in toto* when they reformed its abuses.

They knew better than later Protestants what it was important to protest against in their *own* Church, but they also knew better how to value what was precious in the Catholic heritage. How Catholic they were and remained we can best appreciate when we compare them with modern Protestants who have not the least inkling what Catholic Christianity is. But even to these moderns there have been handed down important factors of Catholicism which they fail to recognize as such. Chief among them is the Catholic Canon of the New Testament and the Catholic estimate of its inerrant inspiration. That was common ground. With respect to other traditions, one Reformer went one way and one another. Luther retained more of the Catholic estimate of the Mass, and Calvin the Catholic estimate of the ministry, — in spite of the fact that he altered the form of it. For our present purpose it is more important to observe that all retained without cavil or question the characteristic practices of Catholic piety. They prayed and fasted and gave alms, and

all this they regarded as a "service" well pleasing to God, even if it was not meritorious. St. Bernard of Clairvaux, the great exponent of Catholic piety in the middle ages, was hardly less the master of Protestant piety. The Protestant Church of England is the case which would best serve my argument, but I do not dwell on it here for fear of seeming to beg the question. For this Church has indeed retained so many Catholic elements that it is commonly suspected of not being Protestant in a clear and representative sense. In this respect, however, it differed only in degree from other Reformed Churches, and it does not seem to me altogether reasonable to condemn the Anglican for the fact that he alone has had sufficient perspicacity to perceive that he is at the same time a Protestant and a Catholic.

But I am not interested in proving the obvious fact that Catholic and Protestant characters *can* be united in the same individual. I maintain that they *must* be so united, that the relationship is not accidental but necessary, and that neither type

is perfected except in such a union. It has become plain to us that the Protestant ideal by itself is impossible of realization; and though the Catholic type is only too possible, it may be said that it is not genuinely Christian except as it is chastened by the austere criticism of a Protestant spirit. It will be commonly conceded that Christianity could never have become Catholic in the sense of universal, if it had not become Catholic in the specific sense that it tolerated and fostered in men the natural human reactions to the idea of the holy. But nowadays it needs to be asserted most sharply that the natural human reactions to the idea of the holy (*i.e.* religiousness in general) have no christian value whatever, unless they are reactions to the realities apprehended by the Christian faith. That is the reason why we must keep our conceptual categories separate and sharp. But that is also the reason why, in their concrete realization, Catholicism and Protestantism must be united in the closest possible embrace. If instead of being fused and united they exist merely side

by side, in the same individual or in neighboring ones, they cannot fructify one another, and nothing can result but conflict or compromise. In answer to the charge of inconsistency I lately gave the too hasty explanation that " I am a Protestant in faith and a Catholic in cult." In fact, that explanation is far more specious than true. The religiousness of Catholicism profoundly colors one's faith (the integral attitude of man to God), and Protestantism (radically irreligious) is an alert censor of the cult, leaving not one item of it unaltered in its significance. The Protestant does not belie his name when he follows Catholic practices, but only when he ceases to apply his criticism to them. He may use whatever religious helps he needs — creeds and sacraments and ceremonies, — but only on the condition that he declines to accept them at their face value, the value which all religious practices pretend to have, as a propitiation, namely, of the divine favor, as a sanctimonious performance, and as a necessary condition of salvation. In his heart the Protestant cannot say, even of the

Catholic creed or of the Catholic sacraments, that except a man believe and practice them " no doubt he shall perish everlastingly."

The fact that there were reformers in the Church before the Reformation has often been exploited by Protestants with the intent of providing for themselves a sort of Apostolical succession; but it seems better adapted for a proof that a man may be a Protestant while he is in all respects a Catholic. And it suggests the presumption that there have continued to be Protestants in the Roman Church *after* the Protestant Reformation, — in spite of the fact that the historical separation of Catholic and Protestant encouraged the notion that the two principles were hostile and incompatible. One may even suspect that today there may perhaps be many more genuine (Christian) Protestants in the Roman Church than in all the Protestant Communions. To put the same query in other words, I wonder if there may not be more Protestant Catholics today than there are Catholic Protestants. For it is observable that the Protestant who

becomes Catholic, building up what he has torn down, is prone to reject his Protestantism and to attach to the things he has newly acquired an importance which seems exorbitant to one who is to the manor born. At all events, it is only as between Catholic Protestants and Protestant Catholics that an understanding is possible, and that an *amplexus,* individual or collective, is within the range of " practical politics." It is for that reason, chiefly, I have endeavored to discriminate the two principles so sharply that they are seen to be in need one of the other, and without the mutual support of interaction appear as monstrous distortions — either impossible or all-too-possible. One who has attained this apprehension will be able to embrace positions which are commonly contrasted, — such as Rudolph Otto's indiscriminate appraisement of religion and the trenchant criticism of it by Karl Barth. Consequently, in my " Problems of Church Unity " I could recommend to Protestants the value of the Catholic cult; and in " Jesus According to St. Mark " I

frequently remark upon our Lord's religiousness, without disguising the radical irreligiousness which he shared with the Prophets.

We have assumed that religiousness is the distinction of the Catholic. We must say rather, uncritical religiousness. For the Protestant too is religious — he cannot get away from it. And it would appear that the modern Protestant has become uncritically religious. There is nothing then left to distinguish him from the Catholic except the fact that he is cut off from the rich expression of religion which the Church derives from a many times secular tradition. The mystical type of religion is common to Protestantism and Catholicism. And the religion of experience (which may be called the Methodist type) is now regnant in Protestantism. It is commonly contrasted with Catholicism; but only superficially, for it too is uncritical religiousness, sustained by a minimum of theology. But the thoroughgoing Protestant protests against the too exuberant manifestations of religion, while

the out and out Catholic imposes upon them no limits. If polytheism proves more religious, he wants that; if idolatry, he will have that too. The modern Protestant is on the same road when he concedes that any religious practice is justifiable if only it works.

It is important to distinguish religion from faith; but it must not be supposed that "Religion *or* Faith" (the title of the first chapter of this book) expresses a dilemma. We are not challenged to love the one and abhor the other. When we have made a just distinction it must be clear to us that we cannot have one without the other. Religion *and* Faith is the practical formula for the Christian life.

Chapter IV

A CHURCH WITHOUT REPENTANCE

In *De Profundis* Oscar Wilde gives a grewsome picture of a Church without faith. He says: "When I think about religion at all, I feel as if I would like to found an order for those who *cannot* believe. The Fraternity of the Fatherless one might call it, where on an altar on which no taper burned, a priest in whose heart peace had no dwelling, might celebrate with unblessed bread and a chalice empty of wine. Everything to be true must become a religion, and agnosticism should have its ritual no less than faith. It has sown its martyrs, it should reap its saints, and praise God daily for having hidden himself from man."

I am now trying to imagine how a Church would look if it were, not without faith, but utterly without repentance. Sir Oliver Lodge remarks that " the modern man does not waste time worrying about his sins." So the situation I have in mind is not altogether imaginary. The picture I form of such a Church is hardly more attractive than that of Wilde, but it is very different. We cannot here speak of a Confraternity of the Fatherless, for the dogma which unites us all in the immense catholicity of a Church without repentance is the Fatherhood of God. And by this we mean that we are his sons — without the least shadow of a doubt, the least suspicion that we are claiming anything presumptuous. Our faith is strong because we feel that we are saying the most natural thing in the world. And from this double dogma we derive the confidence, not only that " God is too good to damn us," but that " we are too good to be damned." In these terms Oliver Wendell Holmes once described the distinction of two small sects: now these words apply aptly

to the great Catholic Church of the Unrepentant. Having this great faith, how could we repent? The Prodigal Son of the parable was not of our Church. He dared to utter the name " Father " (with full appreciation of the *distance* it implies), but he did not feel worthy to call himself a son. Our Church is composed exclusively of Elder Brothers, who have the testimony of a good conscience and are ready to boast that they " never transgressed at any time a commandment " of the heavenly Father. We might call our Church then the Church of the Elder Brothers. Or, if it is only a confraternity we have in mind, let it be called the Confraternity of the Sons of God. That is surely a fine name. But for all that, we must recognize that this is a confraternity not only without repentance but without love. For surely Jesus was not at fault in affirming that they only love much who are much forgiven.

But if this Church of ours lacks love and repentance, there is nothing else that it lacks. We have seen that it has faith, though it ap-

pears to be a faith not so much in God as in man. It cannot be wanting in good works, for the second article of its faith is the Brotherhood of Man. And it need not lack an imposing ritual. The more candles on the altar the better; for do not these lights symbolize the clarity of our "simple" faith that we are "sons of the Most High"? Censers may be swung unceasingly, for does not incense signify the prayers of the *saints,* and who can claim that title so justly as we who confess that we "have no need for repentance"? We are not inclined to make many prayers, and we certainly will not say, "Forgive us our debts," but another prayer which our Lord taught us is thoroughly congenial to our confraternity. There is no insincerity in it, and short as it is, it might be made impressive by a triumphant musical accompaniment: "I thank thee, O God, that I am not as other men are." From how many lips does that prayer go up!

And so this great round world is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God!

Instead of the pitiable figure of a priest "in whose heart peace hath no dwelling," we must picture to ourselves a priest whose mind is conscious of no guilt (*mens conscia recti*), and we can well afford to clothe him "in all the needle-work of noodledom."

But manifestly our ritual must sternly exclude the traditional practice of kneeling before God (not to speak of prostration!), for the worshipper should not for a minute lose the proud consciousness of human dignity. *Homo sum: nihil humani a me alienum puto*, is the creed of Humanism. Least of all will he genuflect when he recites the prodigious confession of the Creed, "And was made man"; for we cannot honestly think that God suffered any humiliation in becoming like us. The statement does not even seem to us prodigious, for according to the prevailing type of idealism, that is what God is always doing: he becomes a stone, he becomes a plant, he becomes a fish, a reptile, a mammal, and finally man! That is his highest reach. Or if we prefer to invert the phrase and assent that Jesus became God, we

can see nothing prodigious in that, for that is what every man could do if he cared to take the pains.

We need not celebrate the sacrament of Communion with unconsecrated bread and an empty chalice, for no symbols could be more congenial to Humanism than "wine which maketh glad the heart of man, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart." But of course we will make no allusion to the fact that in instituting this sacrament Jesus imagined that he was dying *for* us. We must be candid enough to confess that the sacraments involve for us a certain difficulty. It is assumed here that we discard penance. We can tolerate matrimony when we think of it as a way of producing more sons of God — *ad infinitum*. But the very idea of a sacrament is distasteful inasmuch as it assumes that something of immense importance is being done for us which we are unable to do for ourselves. Baptism most of all, for it implies that to enter the Kingdom of God we must pass through a lowly portal, stooping profoundly. We are repelled by the sym-

bol of washing (are we then impure?) and by the implication of immersion (as if the "old Adam," the humanity of which we are so proud, had to be buried!). Least of all can we tolerate the affirmation that we are "conceived and born in sin," — and in fact the Episcopal Church in America has lately "changed all that." We have almost succeeded in making baptism unobjectionable. Why not regard it simply as a way "to fulfil all righteousness"? — to use the phrase Matthew employs in apologizing for the baptism of Jesus. This means that we may tolerate it as a venerable religious rite. In a German book on etiquette I find this persuasive apology for baptism: *Es ist ein Forderung des gutten Tons* — a requisite of good form. But why not then regard it as the occasion for us to receive (as Jesus did) God's solemn assurance: "Thou art my Son, in whom I am well pleased"? Does not St. Peter say of baptism that it is "the *answer* of a good conscience in the sight of God"? — But perhaps our English translation is at fault. Perhaps the Vulgate trans-

lates better with the word *interrogatio*. And perhaps Albert Schweitzer is right when he says that " a good conscience is an invention of the devil."

It must appear by this time that my description of a Church without repentance is not altogether imaginary. And the sagacious reader may have noticed that the worship of this Church is directed not so much to God as to man. That must be condemned as a mistaken worship unless man is divine. And this is an opinion which we are still diffident about expressing. But how can it not be our intimate conviction when we conceive ourselves as " last and best of things " and are resolved to recognize no authority *over* us? We might feel less embarrassment in making this claim openly, if we recognized how natural it is. One of the most distinguished psycho-analysts discovers the delusion of " god-almightyness " in the new-born babe! I venture to suspect that in the unicellular organism there is already a trace of it — in the molecule, in the atom! And that it is because of this pretense of

independence "the whole universe groans and travails until now," being intimately though not effectively separated from God.

We have to enquire what place there is for Jesus in this Church composed exclusively of godlike beings. Obviously his place cannot be so unique as once it was. He may be in degree more divine than the rest of us, and yet we hesitate to attribute to him so unique a title as that of the Christ. Clearly we can no longer speak of him as Saviour, if we are not ready to confess that we need to be saved. But for all that, we accord him a conspicuous place. Never before have men so much emphasized his value as a model, — an example of what every man might become if he would. We are taught to stop at every step and ask, "What would Jesus do," if he were in our place? Taken seriously, that is a question which must prove very disconcerting. For there can be no doubt that, if he were in our place, Jesus would manage to embitter against him all the religious authorities and somehow contrive to have him-

self put to death. We are rather too modern for that. When we come to think of it, we are too modern to follow either the example or the precepts of Jesus. What we really mean is that we think the Golden Rule is very pretty. Jesus' first precept was, "Repent," and it has been assumed all along that we are too modern for that.

It does not seem fair that our modernism should be counted a reproach. Living in this late time, we *are* modern, as a matter of course. How could we help it? We count ourselves sufficiently loyal to Christianity, if we conserve so much of the original faith as now can be salvaged. Whether that includes belief in God is a question about which men differ. But at all events, no one can require us to retain articles of faith which are contradicted by modern science. That is what all Liberals affirm, and I have no difficulty in agreeing with them. Nothing could be more reasonable. And yet who more than they are inclined to break this rule? I reflect that it is most obviously against the Liberal interpretation of Christianity that

" Nature, red in tooth and claw, with ravin shrieks." No theory of biological evolution gives countenance to "our" extravagant optimism with regard to man, and the Darwinian theory fairly slaps it in the face. We hold it not only in despite of science, but in glaring opposition to the picture of man which is presented to us in our favorite romances and in the daily chronicle of our newspapers. If this is a true picture, it would appear that man has only too much reason to repent, — if only there was some one to repent to. I remember Thomas Huxley's affirmation that Calvinism is the form of Christianity most in harmony with science. I do not fail to detect his subtile aim of disparaging Christianity as a whole by exalting an aspect of it which his hearers were prejudiced against. But this aphorism is true, even though it is misleading. Instead of using a name of reproach, it would be more honest to speak of Paulinism, or of Augustinianism, or, more simply, of orthodox Christianity. At all events, it is my conviction that the ancient faith of the Church is more conso-

nant with science than is the most modern interpretation of it.

Unconventionally I began this sermon without a text. Perhaps it may be thought that the Bible can contain no text appropriate to a Church which is without repentance because it is composed entirely of gods. But I have no difficulty in finding one: the sixth verse of the eighty-second Psalm. Note that it is God himself that speaks, and you are not to imagine that he speaks in irony:

I said, Ye are gods,
All of you sons of the Most High.

The whole Psalm, in fact is strikingly appropriate to our case. I do not ignore the fact that the psalmist ("Asaph") had in view, not the lay people, but more particularly the clergy, who in the theocracy were also the "judges" of the nation, that is, the temporal rulers. That is clear in the terrible warning of the first verses:

Elohim standeth in the congregation of God (El);

He *judgeth in the midst of the elohim* (these gods!).

And what is his judgment upon these "judges" who take themselves to be gods?

How long will ye judge unjustly,
And show favor to the wicked?
Judge the weak and the fatherless,
Do justice to the afflicted and destitute,
Rescue the weak and the needy,
Deliver them out of the hand of the wicked.

But God knows that this appeal is in vain, for he knows the "judges."

They know not, neither do they understand;
They walk to and fro in darkness [these guides of the blind!];
All the foundations of the land totter.

That is only too evident. Even in our privileged land the foundations of society are shaken. Or at least they are not so secure as we would like them to be for our peace of mind. Our comfort is in saying, "After *us* the deluge."

But the sixth verse evidently applies to us:

I said, Ye are gods,
All of you sons of the Most High.

That is a truth which is not exactly self-evident, and it sounds paradoxical in the highest degree when we listen to the grim warning which follows. It is this warning I wish to recommend to this congregation of God I am now addressing. What if Elohim were to *come* in our midst, as we often beseech him to do? But "come" is not the word our Psalm uses: God does not need to *come,* he "standeth" here. Statuesque, yet invisible! He is Elohim — not the God of revelation (Jahve), who made himself known to Moses, metaphysically (as "I am what I am"), and historically (as "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"); but this is the God of whom Jesus said that "No man hath seen him at any time." It is not a question of invisibility but of incomprehensibility. He is the unknown God, utterly paradoxical, who made both the tiger and the lamb, the crocodile

(leviathan), the hippopotamus (behemoth), and all the strange menagerie which brought Job to silence and godly fear. So paradoxical that he was given a plural name, to signify that we know him only as the synthesis and reflection of every numinous experience:

Our dearest faith, our ghastliest doubt:
He, They, One, All, within, without,
The power in darkness which we guess.

This is He (Elohim) who stands in the congregation of (us) gods, and while he corroborates the high opinion we hold of ourselves ("all of you sons of the Most High"), he adds this grim presage:

Yet like men shall ye die,
And perish like one of the princes.

That is to say, like all the supermen who have preceded us. We know that perfectly well, but we are very much inclined to forget it. We ought not to forget it for a moment, — not merely because it is wise to look ahead, but because this is a fact which teaches us what we are *now*. That we *shall*

die means that we *are* mortal. And this saying — "Ye are gods, yet ye shall die like men" — gives us to understand, not only how precarious is our existence, but how problematical a thing is man. Neither the tiger nor the lamb is problematical, nor leviathan, nor behemoth. They simply are what they are. Even the ape would present no problem to us, if it did not ape man. But man is not what he is:

Man partly is, and wholly hopes to be.

In spite of what we *are* (phenomenally) we *are* sons of the Most High. We cannot repudiate this intolerable attribution of rank, notwithstanding that it deprives us of the favorite excuse for our miserable deficiencies, namely, that we are mere men, in whom the ape and tiger are not yet dead. In pronouncing that word which seems so flattering, God wholly justifies his judgment against us. We are gods! Hence it is not possible for us to ignore that we are miserable and wicked men. We can understand now why St. Paul, when he would put our guilt

in the most glaring light, affirms that "we have fallen short of the glory of God."

If we were always following the "upward calling of God in Christ Jesus" — every moment and to eternity — who knows if, by our own effort, we might not attain to heaven and sit down on the right hand of God. But three score years and ten is too pitifully short a term for us to become what we are — to become gods! The "princely men" of Confucius and the "supermen" of Nietzsche, even

Golden boys and girls all must,
Like chimney sweepers, come to dust.

That is the "invidious truth" which levels all distinctions among men, and also renders ridiculous the egalitarian boast that we are *all* of us gods. Gods who are about to die — and so soon, and so miserably! Gods who commence to die from the moment they are born, and are condemned to bear about "the body of this death!" Was Paul the only man who has cried, "Who will deliver me?" Or did he alone, in all these

Christian centuries, reply, God will, Thanks be to Him?

It must be clear that I am no longer thinking of "a Church without repentance," but of a Church ("the congregation of El") full of repentant elohim.

Chapter V

"RELIGION AN OPIATE OF THE PEOPLE"

The famous maxim of Karl Marx, that "religion is an opiate of the people," may or may not be true. In any case it strikes us as bad taste for the Soviet authorities to stigmatize the Churches which they are powerless to suppress by placarding this motto above their doors. We may hope that the Churches of Russia are none the worse for this form of persecution, though we may be malicious enough to believe that under the old regime the Church was deliberately used as an opiate. Protestant prejudice inclines to think that the Roman Church, though it is not subservient to the State, cultivates a spirit of contentment with insti-

tutions which have too long prevailed. To call it an opiate would be only an exaggeration. At any rate, all of us can agree with the student at Moscow, who coming from a remote soviet republic, learned to despise the primitive religion of his tribe and wrote in his copy-book, "Shamanism is an opiate of the people." We must be willing to concede that the dictum of Karl Marx, not being formulated exclusively with reference to Christianity, may contain some truth. The study of the religions of mankind is apt to prompt suspicion and disgust. Only the very ignorant will seek to quench the zeal of Christian missions by the affirmation that all the pagan religions are "good enough" for the people that profess them. The multitudes who have read "Mother India" will cherish no such optimism. But by this I do not mean to suggest that the contemptuous dictum of Marx applies appropriately to some religions but not at all to others, — not to our own religion, for example. Religions are all too much alike to permit so sharp a distinction, and it may be profitable

for us to consider in how far our own religion may be open to this charge.

When it is asserted that "one religion is as good as another," the meaning probably is that all religions offer a comfortable delusion, and that though one may be a bit more comfortable than another, all are fairly equal on this score. "Comfort" is, in fact, what men commonly seek in religion — and if that is what they seek, they should frankly confess that they are seeking an opiate. Robert Browning was not speaking in vain when he pilloried our search for comfort in the discomfort of Jesus upon the Cross:

All this took place, you think,
Only to give our joys a zest
And prove our sorrows for the best.

We are ready to listen to the "comfortable words" of Jesus and prone to ignore those which, to say the least of them, are uncomfortable. Prophets generally (and not Jesus only) exemplify a sort of religion (if that word is appropriate in this connection)

which is emphatically *un*comfortable — both to the prophet himself and to his hearers. So far from being an opiate, it instigates radical reforms, prompts to desperate adventure, brings one to perilous brinks, and often *over* them. Their disciples commonly can do no more than transmute all that into a religion — containing more or less bromide.

In spite of the humble origins of religion, in spite of the descriptive study of it which is so disquieting, and the disparaging appraisement of the psychologists, we are inclined to regard *our* own religion as altogether pure and undefiled, as though it were a religion *sui generis*. That cannot reasonably be claimed of Christianity in any period of its history, — not even in the Apostolic age. For example, the Apostle James has only indignant and disparaging words for the sort of religion he encountered in the Church of his day. Much of it he stigmatizes as "vain religion." He uses, it is true, another phrase: "pure religion and undefiled," — which might seem to

justify the hope that, given due time for evolution, religion might be refined to this degree. But soon we realize that this was one of the hardest words ever spoken against religion. For we discover that the only religion which St. James thought pure and undefiled is not religion at all, in the proper acceptation of the word, but a trait of morality, the practice of active benevolence. The implication is that religion *qua* religion (an all-too-human thing!) is always impure and defiled, even when it is genuine. History and anthropology leave us in no doubt about that. Familiar are the names of Baal and Asteroth, Jugernauth and Aphrodite and many such, whose worship was either cruel or obscene; and we cannot imagine that St. James would have accounted the worship of Zeus or of Jupiter Optimus Maximus as above reproach. However it was not of pagan religions St. James was thinking. He is speaking to *us* about *our* religion, and he declares that much of it is " vain." He does not mean *unreal*. That too may be charged against us. For hypocrisy and unreality are

dangers especially of the highest religions. The primitive man is only too genuine in his religiousness. He wants to kill his enemy, or the animal he is hunting, and he frankly asks the aid of his god. On the highest plane we more rarely hear a genuine expression of religion. The Psalms are peculiarly precious for that reason.

O Lord, the God of my salvation,
I have cried day and night before thee:
Let my prayer enter into thy presence;
Incline thine ear unto my cry.

These words with which the 88th Psalm begins condemn us who merely "say" our prayers, asking for what we do not really want, with no disquieting expectation that we shall receive it. We have to confess to ourselves that such religion is "vain," a thing of naught.

But St. James had in mind something worse than that! He contemplated the impurity and defilement even of ardent worship addressed to the one true God: "Ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it upon your

lusts." He anticipated Freud in detecting a connection between *libido* and religion. And this is not the only fault we can find with genuine religion. Must it not be accounted an impurity and defilement in our religion that in our prayers we treat God as if he were not God, ignoring the " distance " and wagging the tongue?

St. James is speaking of the religion as he saw it in the Church of his day and as we see it in ours. He is speaking to *us*, as Kierkegaard would say. But in what he says about the *tongue* I recognize that he means *me* more especially. He is thinking of the vice of preachers: those who are ambitious to *teach others* (III.1), who are more swift to speak than to hear (1.19), who " bridle not the tongue " (1.26). He has in mind therefore something far worse than silly or spiteful gossip, and the strong language he uses about the tongue (that it is " set on fire by hell ") may be justified by its reference to the preachers who, instead of preaching " the engrafted Word which is able to save men's souls " (1.21), declaim their own

thoughts (whatever enters their head, whatever surges up from their heart), pretending that their own words are the Word of God.

The official history of the dynasty of *Tsinn* contains a biography of the celebrated monk Kumāra-jīva, a Hindu missionary to China in the fourth century of our era. He was adroit in winning royal favor, active in building monasteries, and proficient as a writer on religious themes, although his manners were notoriously corrupt. When after his death his body was burned according to Indian custom, among the cinders of the funeral pyre the tongue was found perfectly intact, — a sign, it was thought, that though his life had been far from edifying, his doctrine was unimpeachable.

Even in his day St. James could observe that faith, which is antithetical to religion, had become just one religious item among others — a creed, " a form of sound words," a thing properly belonging to the province of the tongue and of the ear — " without works," like the faith of devils (II.19). Like much of the orthodoxy of yesterday — and

like much of the liberalism of today, whose boast is only that it holds a more enlightened creed.

James wanted no more of such faith, and no more of the sort of religion which predominated in his environment. And he was not contending for "a more real religion": he demanded a different kind of thing altogether. The only "religion pure and undefiled," he says, is not religion at all, but altruistic morality. That is a judgment very disparaging to religion, but we have no reason to be surprised at it, for in it we recognize the voice of the ancient prophets (Isaiah 1.11–17); and six hundred years later it was the "burden" of the prophecy of Jesus. For the Prophets would have put an end altogether to such religious cults as Israel practiced in their time. They recognized no divine law requiring the people to "trample" God's courts. God demands "mercy and not sacrifice" (Hosea VI.6). In spite of the Prophets most of the features of the ancient cult were preserved (for man is an incurably religious animal!), and many

pious practices were added which suited the taste of a more refined age. Then came Jesus and demolished all this religiousness piece by piece, beginning with the Synagogue and ending with the Temple. Hosea, Amos, Isaiah, and then Jesus — you can call them all religious men if you like, but not in the sense in which we like to define and practice religion. We assume too lightly that Jesus must have been a religious man. The dogma of the Incarnation, on the contrary, would seem to forbid us to think that the Son stood in so human a relation to the divine Father. And yet it is a fact — the Synoptic Gospels do not scruple to represent him in the religious attitude of prayer, in utmost humility making petitions that were never to be granted, approaching God upon his knees or prostrate upon the ground, in fear and trembling. But that we must account his deepest humiliation. He became man so absolutely that, like other men, he must live by faith, feed solely upon grace, must pray, and must even be baptized!

Instead of religious cult (*thraskaia*) St.

James requires altruistic morality, active benevolence. Many make that dictum a pretext for neglecting Christian worship and ignoring the Christian faith. That they lead a reputable life and occasionally do deeds of charity is enough, they think, to substantiate the claim that they are Christians "pure and undefiled." But they ignore at least one half of St. James' prescription: that a man "keep himself unspotted from the world." That is not mere morality but religion; it is the negative side of other-worldliness. "Fasting from the world" is the phrase of the *Didache*.

"Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness," if it involves other-worldiness. For it confronts us not only with the moral difficulty of renouncing the world, but with the intellectual difficulty of determining what precisely this "world" is which we are called upon to renounce. We avoid that puzzle if we renounce the world *en bloc*, ascetically or Buddhistically. And so long as we regard the "world" as a thing altogether without us there is no other way.

For then we have no criterion for determining what is "world" and what is not "world." We like to think that the Kingdom of heaven is within us, and that the world, the Kingdom of Satan, is altogether outside of us. But in fact it is just the other way around. The Kingdom of heaven is not in us, nor can we claim that we are in it: our only possible relation to it *now* is that upon it (as upon "the things which are above") we can set our mind (Col.III.2). But to discover the "world" we must look within us. The world is bad only as our environment, only as we misuse it and corrupt it.

Other-worldliness, both in its positive and its negative aspect, is clearly not a trait of morality but of religion, though it is not every religion which encourages it. It has been discarded in our day on the plea that it is a sort of religion which is not so pure and undefiled as St. James would have us think. And doubtless it is capable of grave abuse. Our mythical description of the heavenly country may be pretty much on the same plane as the Mohammedan picture

of sensuous rewards in heaven, as the Indian's Happy Hunting-ground, as the Taoist's Western Paradise. But we have received no such myths from the lips of Jesus. He represents the heavenly hope as the utterly inconceivable ("What eye hath not seen, neither ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to believe") as the impossible possibility, as the crisis, as the faith which prompts to repentance and impels to heroic deeds, driving us to perilous brinks and sustaining us there.

"Our faith is the victory which overcometh the world," says St. John (1 Jn.v.4). Prone as we are to confound faith and religion, we would hardly venture to paraphrase this dictum by affirming that our *religion* is the victory which overcometh the world. For religion as such does not require the renunciation of the world, does not assume (except in the way of magic) to conquer it, but pretends to exploit it for the advantage of the worshipper. Religion and the world are not antithetical terms. Religion is too human a thing, too much of the

world, to be put in contrast with it. The contrast we rightly draw is that between God and the world; for the whole world becomes "world" to us if we prefer it to God. And yet, in a deeper sense, this contrast is improper. It implies on the part of the world a substantial independence which does not belong to it (for it does not exist apart from God), and in setting God over against the world it puts him along side of it, as a factor of the same rank. We should require a God above this God to unite the two (world *and* God) in one universe.

On a more superficial level we delude ourselves with the notion that what was "world" for the Early Christians, when they had to contend with a hostile state and with competing religions, is no longer "world" for us, now that society and the culture which it sustains have, as we fondly imagine, been Christianized, and the hostile religions (the part of the world which has *evidently* not been Christianized) have substantially been extruded from Christendom. A great delusion! For the world has not been

Christianized *for us* unless *we* are Christianized completely. And not then — not until we have reached (Buddhistically speaking) the stage of the *ahrat*, in which there is no longer any attachment to the world. And the pagan religions are the least dangerous of our enemies. We are in little danger of anything in which we can plainly detect the demoniacal. Against religions our faith is able to defend us; for faith is of the spirit, whereas religion is of the soul. But when faith meets faith! When faith in God meets faith in the world! There the victory may well seem dubious. There we can descry our redoubtable enemy. At the Jerusalem meeting of 1927 a *name* was found for this foe, which is at least more distinctive than the word "world" which we have rendered unserviceable. It was called there "Secularism," and the echo of that discovery has reverberated around the earth. But to estimate the value of that discovery we must define rightly the word "secularism." We have learned nothing new and nothing valuable, if we understand that word to mean nothing

more than we commonly mean by the word "world." We prove that we have not discovered our real enemy, if, like narrow sectaries, we oppose ourselves to all the acquists of culture, to the triumphs of science, and to the immense material development which has followed. Secularism does not describe the scientific study of history, biology, chemistry, physics and all the technical developments which have followed, in the way of skyscrapers, railroads, automobiles, cinema, radio, and flying machines. Secular society (if we must make that distinction) is conforming to a divine mandate in subduing the earth. It is not the pursuance of these aims and interests which is properly called secularism, but it is *faith* in these things. In secularism religion encounters an opposite faith. It is faith in what man can do to bring about a perfect condition of society, a kingdom of God on earth, a Tower of Babel. This, however, is a faith which reposes in things seen, attaches itself to immediate meanings and values, while it ignores, if it does not deny, the meaningfulness of the

whole, the ground of all individual meanings and values which is the object of religious faith. That is the negative aspect of secularism and its most serious danger, because it tends to empty life of all real meaning, and because the void which it makes is hospitable to destructive demons. Prof. Tillich (*Das Dämonische,* p. 38ff.) brings to light the *daemonia* which lurks in the most characteristic institutions of our day: in capitalism, in the secularized state, in unmoralized business. "Our warfare is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephes.VI.12).

But the Church must not insolently assume that religion, in contrast with secularism, is altogether in the right. Prof. Tillich, in another connection (*Kirche und Kulture,* p. 10) observes that "the Church is the permanent bad conscience of society, and society the permanent bad conscience of the Church." It is the despair of the Church that it cannot embrace the whole of society and

all its cultural acquisitions, while it is the despair of secular society that it cannot become the kingdom of God. This is a sign that the division which actually exists between the Church and society, between the religious and the secular, between the sacred and the profane, is not essential, not according to nature. Both terms are condemned by being contrasted. Condemned most evidently by the futility they are both reduced to, — which is a token that they are condemned by God, who is not in one of these terms more than the other, but is sovereign over both. The claim to possess a monopoly of God is an intolerable insolence on the part of the Church. In its condemnation of society the Church would be justified only if it were actually, as it aims and claims to be, the realization of the Kingdom of God. But actually it is not that, so long as it does not include secular society and the culture which is sustained by it. The Church at its best (when it does not withdraw from the world, satisfied with its own holiness) cherishes the ambition of sanctifying society and

secular culture. But by the very fact that the Church is contrasted with society it is impotent to save it. Only God can do that. Only a word of God, a revelation, which does not issue from the Church but thunders over it, can save both by condemning both. Condemning both Church and society in their isolation, in order that they may be united, — rather may be seen as parts destined to be united in the Kingdom of God. Historically, the prophetic "burden," whether of the ancient Prophets or of John the Baptist or of Jesus, weighed not less heavily against religion and the Church than against secularism and the world.

Returning again to a more superficial plane, it must be noted that we plague ourselves with an unreal dilemma when we contrast religion and morality and assume that a choice must be made between them. That these two human interests cannot be rudely separated is proved broadly by the fact that there has never been a religion, even among primitive men, which did not prescribe rules of conduct for the individual and for

society. It is commonly believed that this *binding* character explains the etymology of the word *religio*.

It is clear that St. James does not regard religion and morality as antithetical terms. It would be more plausible to say that he identifies them. As a matter of fact, between religion and active benevolence he distinguishes clearly enough to show which has his preference; but paradoxically he calls the latter also " religion." He has a good enough right to do this, — though not in the sense which we attribute to the word in *our* vocabulary. For when we contrast the duties of religion and morality, we commonly conceive that the one represents our duty to God, and the other a duty to our neighbor. By religion we mean religious cult — sacrifice, fasting and prayer. With some it has meant hardly more than hallowing a particular day in the week and listening to sermons. If on the other side of the scale we put justice, mercy and truth, there can be no doubt which weighs heaviest, and which must be preferred, — supposing that we are

faced by a real dilemma and must make a choice. But in fact God has as much to do with one side of this dilemma as with the other. When Jesus formulated the whole Law in two commandments he did not contrast them. They both stand under the uniting rubric: "Hear, O Israel! The Lord thy God is one Lord." God is equally in both commandments: he pronounces them both and provides for both the sanction. Because they insisted upon the second commandment, both Jesus and the Prophets might be called irreligious men, but no one would call them godless. To love one's neighbor, "as for God's laws," if it is not so religious a thing, must be accounted as godly a thing as the love of God, seeing that it is obedience to his commandment. It is characteristic of the dialectic of St. John that (like St. James) he treats the second commandment as the practical first, conceiving rightly that the only ostensible proof of love to God is love of the brethren (1 Jn.IV.20). It must be presumed that God will be pleased at having his commandments obeyed,

and best pleased when obedience takes the form of imitation ("the sincerest flattery") of his great mercifulness (Lk.vi.36).

Were I not very much interested in religion I would not talk so much about it. I have studied no subject with such persistence as the religions of mankind. If the proper study of mankind is man, this ought to be a principal part of it, for nothing is more human. In fact, religion is an interest which very many profess, — and never more than today. The majority of educated people are as much interested in religion as their more urgent and serious occupations permit. As a preacher I have frequently dealt with this theme with the intent of interesting people in Christianity. Perhaps my sermons did not fail of *this* effect. But how remote is "interest in Christianity" from faith! how irrelevant to faith in the Gospel! how incommensurate with the apprehension of our personal crisis! how incompatible with repentance! how opposite to the effect of hearing the Word of God which both con-

demns and justifies, which kills us and makes us alive again!

I do not wonder any longer that the prevalent "interest in religion" proves of so little advantage to the Church. When a man professes an "interest in Christianity" he declares how remote he is from Christ; for this is a supercilious word which insolently ignores the "distance" between man and God. Yet common as this phrase is, not many would go the length of affirming that they are "interested" in God, and there is a note of self-conscious bravado in the assertion that one is "interested" in Jesus Christ.

We can rightly enough say that we are interested in religion; but it is worthy of remark that the Bible gives scant encouragement to such an interest. The Children of Israel were for nothing so sharply rebuked as for their interest in religions, whether native or foreign. Such rebuke was less needed by the people of the New Covenant, for it is notorious that they were not interested (not nearly so much interested as we are) in the various religions which they once fol-

lowed and had discarded with abhorrence. No Old Testament character, I should say, was so much interested in religion as was Balaam. He was expert in all the technique of it. From the New Testament it would appear that an absorbing interest in religion meant hostility to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus' followers were irreligious people, and the Pharisees, the most religious people in the land, were his bitterest enemies. Hardly less zealous were the pagan religionists who shouted for two hours on end, " Hurrah for Diana of the Ephesians," and were determined to put an end to Christianity. The New Testament gives us a still more instructive example of a people interested in religion. It is the case of the Athenians, and it is an ominous example, so far as the Gospel is concerned. St. Paul's speech on Mars' Hill began infelicitously, according to our familiar translation, with the charge that his hearers are " too superstitious." Our modern versions have softened this into " somewhat religious." But perhaps this is too soft. " Very much interested in religion," is the

phrase by which I should prefer to render, in this instance, the sense of *deisidaimonesterous*. That is what St. Paul could easily infer from what he saw at Athens, and he could easily detect also that this " interest " (like ours) was very far from being fanatical. If the Athenians had been fanatically attached to their religion, perhaps they would not have listened to St. Paul at all, or perhaps they would have heard him with better effect.

I raise the question whether an interest in religion which is not strong enough to be fanatical has any excuse for being at all. The curious interest in religion which the Athenians displayed in the gods would have given place to something very different if by some sign God were evidently known to be in the midst of them, — speaking through Paul! When Death stalks in the midst of men, who has the bravado to say that he is " interested "? The hand of Death, though far less awful than the finger of God, evokes an apprehension of the transcendental, the absolute, the irrevocable. But we are not

" interested ": we turn our faces resolutely away, wilful to forget. And perhaps — for there are intimations of the soul's survival — perhaps " the second death " alone is absolute, irrevocable. Is it *then* that God's finger touches us? No, that is when it does *not* touch us, when no hand is stretched out in aid of our naked soulishness, and we are left to be dealt with after our sins and rewarded according to our iniquities. But if *now*, while it is yet time, God's finger should touch us? If out of the ancient Scriptures (so difficult to understand because of their antiquity) some message should reach us as the authentic Word of God? — or perhaps through the all-too-modern prating of the preachers? — or perhaps through the " stifled splendor and gloom " of our religious cult? *Interest* would not be the word to describe an experience which calls us to " Attention! " and commands, " Right-about-face! "

Is this a digression? or does it apply pertinently to St. Paul's speech at Athens, addressed to a people whose curious interest

in religion was an opiate which dulled their apprehension of God's Word? St. Paul proclaims that God was also *interested* in them (not altogether a comfortable thought!); that during the long time of their ignorance he was inclined to "overlook" the insolence of their "interest" in him; but *now* commandeth (there is a touch of the absolute!) — "now commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (which is the last thing people interested in religion are ready to do!), "inasmuch as he hath appointed a Day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by a man whom he hath ordained."

This "Now" means a space for repentance, the critical epoch (*xairos*) which that "man" by his coming inaugurated, whereas that "Day" when he shall come again lies inexorably beyond the *xairos*, "the accepted time." We wonder that "a man" can mean so much in the kosmos. We wonder that St. Paul bestows no honorific epithets upon this "man" — does not call him Christ, or Lord, or God. In fact, he simply "preached Jesus and the Resurrection" (Acts xvii.

18). But even so there was danger that his hearers should suppose he was eager to engage their *interest* in " foreign deities " (daimonia). Hence he speaks so soberly of " a man." Yet to this " man " he gives a meaning which we do not attain when we laud him as the Second Person of the Trinity — and ignore the Resurrection, *i.e.* the eschatological reference of this Son of Man.

St. Luke is not at fault in affirming that Paul " preached Jesus and the Resurrection " (*cf.* 2 Cor.xi.4; 1 Cor.x.12). That meant the same as " preaching repentance and the remission of sins " (Lk.xxiv.47), but it had reference also to " that Day in which God will judge the secrets of men " (Rom.ii.16). " According to my Gospel," is the phrase St. Paul significantly adds, — not implying that this Gospel is a peculiarity of his, but that it is the only authentic Christianity. If *this* is religion, it is clearly not " natural religion," not human religion, but revelation. Our " interest in religion " is an opiate which tends to dull our ears to this Word of God. It is likely that some of you,

like the Athenians, will mock at the resurrection of the dead. Like the Athenians we prefer to believe in the immortality of the soul. But likely some, who are more polite, will express a desire to "hear concerning this yet again" — not "now," however, not in the *xairos,* not in the accepted time.

Chapter VI

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

"We," said St. Paul, referring to the Apostolic labor of sowing the seed and laying foundations, "We are God's *fellow-workers.*" I know very well how attractive that thought is, and how stimulating; but also how easily it can seduce us to conceive that we are God's competitors. We may become even more insolent. The Episcopal Church has officially sanctioned the notion that "God has no hands but my hands," and all the Churches unite in boasting that it is man's task to build up the Kingdom of God. But there is no trace of such *hybris* (insolence) in the thought of St. Paul. He regarded "planting" and "watering" as humble tasks: the miracle is that "God gives the increase." "Ye are God's husbandry,

God's building," he says. This is what we read in 1 Cor.III.7–9 — and no passage in the Bible gives us a more plausible pretext for self-exaltation. We are taught to call ourselves " soldiers of Jesus Christ," but *not* fellow-soldiers. That was the claim (*soli invicto comiti*) with which the devotees of Mythras put themselves on a level with their god. However much that notion may appeal to us, we must be made uneasy by the apprehension that in our day, and by reason of our defection, Mythracism threatens to triumph over Christianity. What is now going on is a triumph of " peaceful penetration," and already it has come to such a pass that multitudes of Christians are thrown into angry despair by any threat to deprive them of this competitive motive for doing good. " What have we left? " they cry. " Why seek to do the works of God, if God by himself can establish his own Kingdom? "

This tendency is not new. It would be strange if a trait so human had not manifested itself before, even in Christendom. Constantine the Great stamped upon his

coins the Mythraic motto I just now quoted. And that is the more significant because we have abundant reason to know that the Emperor considered himself an *indispensable* fellow-worker of God. He was not only "bishop of the bishops," but "the equal of the Apostles" (*issapostolos*) and indeed *primus inter pares*. He conceived (with how much more show of reason than we can educe!) that he was God's chief fellow-worker in building up a kingdom of heaven upon earth. *Evidently*, for besides the religious and spiritual motives which the Church employed, the Emperor was able to bring to bear the whole power of the state and every instrumentality of culture. Like us, he trusted largely to material means; and, like us, he found eschatology distasteful because it dimmed the glory of his earthly achievement. Zahn remarks how nearly Eusebius, the court bishop, succeeded in his machinations to exclude the Apocalypse from the Canon. He was intolerant of apocalyptic prophecy if he could not point to its fulfilment in Constantine and the

Kingdom of God which he was bringing about. The Emperor it was that had trodden the dragon (paganism) under foot; by building a few churches he in Palestine had, "perhaps," realized the prophecy of the New Jerusalem, and by the bountiful banquets he provided for the bishops he was fulfilling the promise of the celestial banquet in the Kingdom of God. There was little doubt that the Kingdom had already come. It was the Holy Roman Empire, all but in name.

It surprises us that the sincerest Christians were discontented with this earthly Kingdom of God! They turned hermits and went by tens of thousands into the wilderness. Neither did they return to the world, to do a work in it as monks, until all men were ready to confess that this world was bad, and not a fit place for a divine Kingdom. Something sudden had happened to change men's minds: Rome had been taken by the Goths; Constantine's Kingdom of God had been upset by a small nation of barbarians; and though the Empire was not

yet destroyed, men could see clearly that it was neither divine nor eternal.

In this emergency Augustine's book on the *City of God* comforted men with the notion that the Church, as a spiritual society, — being the only stable thing that was left, — might be regarded as a fulfilment of the prophecy of the Kingdom of God. The Church has never laid aside that aureole, yet it has never been content with it. The Church — a mere spiritual society — still claims to be the Kingdom of God; but it still stretches after a more satisfying ideal, to be accomplished by the incorporation of secular society and all its traditions of culture. That chance happened once again. As the western world slowly and painfully acquired a new culture, the Church remaining supreme, moulded and appropriated it, having reason to be proud that it could point once more to a Kingdom of God in flesh and blood. The emancipation of secular society from the Church at the end of the middle ages put an end to a dream which was almost a reality. But the same chance

may happen yet again, for it is becoming evident that both the Church and secular society suffer from their separation. They may enter into a new connubium, different from that of the middle ages, but not less beneficial to men. No one of us is wise enough to say how this can be brought about, and it is to be hoped that when it comes about men will not claim to have done it. But especially must we beware lest we regard our more or less adequate human arrangements as anything but a more or less inadequate *symbol* of God's Kingdom.

Without controversy, Jesus' message dealt predominantly with the "Kingdom of God." If we do not understand what he meant by that, we have not understood him at all.

It is a mistake to suppose that the fundamental divergence in the interpretation of the Kingdom of God is between the extremest apocalyptic eschatologists and those who advocate a mild or mediating position. The question is whether we will have any eschatology at all. It must be asserted most

emphatically that no one proposes to foist fantastic apocalyptic symbolism upon the Church of today. It may be conceded that it occupied a small place in the Apostolic Church, and quickly faded. Today the question is whether we can or will entertain a heavenly hope, whether we apprehend the orientation which Jesus impressed upon his disciples, and whether we are oriented in the same sense. It is vain for us to discuss the meaning of this or that saying of Jesus, if we have no integral notion of his purpose, of the direction in which he was moving and in which he would move us. Did he teach us to look around about us to detect the main chance, or to look forward to things which have not been seen neither hath it entered into the heart of man to believe? It must be agreed that Jesus dealt largely in promises (Sermon on the Mount): are we to take it that these were short term notes payable here, or long term notes payable in heaven? But, really, such terms are inept: duration in time has no pertinence to the Kingdom of God. We should ask, Is it within time or be-

yond it? — that is, in eternity. Two thousand years is our reckoning of the duration of time since Jesus proclaimed, "The Kingdom of God is at hand." In *time* it may be still far off, but eternity is always near us.

It is astonishing that we pay so little attention to the passage of Scripture which is read in our hearing more often than any other, and under conditions of the greatest solemnity. *Our* notion of the Kingdom of God, — that it must come about through the operation of forces inherent in this world (physical, or biological, or psychical); that we men are chiefly responsible for it; that we are to look for it *here* (on an earth not radically regenerated) and *now* (in what Ernest Haeckel called contemptuously "a spurious eternity" — indefinitely extended time); and that it means, at its utmost sublimation, no more than the immortality of the soul, — all this vain imagination is demolished piece by piece in the fifteenth chapter of St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians which we hear in the office of the burial of the dead.

It would seem as if we might the more willingly suffer ourselves to be instructed by this chapter about the nature of the Kingdom of God, seeing that it contains only the slightest vestige of apocalyptic symbolism. This one vestige is "the last trump" (verse 52) — and that we can afford to ignore in this connection. St. Paul himself on occasion could dispense entirely with apocalyptic imagery, as when he exclaimed, (Phil.1.23), "to depart and be with Christ is very far better." But I am unwilling to think that "the judgment-seat of Christ" (2 Cor.v. 10; Mt.xxv.31–46) can be disposed of as one of the stage properties of apocalyptic prophecy; or that we can afford to ignore the difference between "the resurrection of the dead" and the immortality of the soul.

It is certain that for St. Paul the Kingdom of God involved a momentous *change,* both for the quick and the dead. And when he says, "We shall be changed" (verse 51), he does not mean that we shall change ourselves. He is not thinking of the transformation of the caterpillar into the butterfly, or any

other example of ontogenetical development. He does not adduce the analogy of the grain of wheat as an instance of a well understood law of growth, but as a miracle. He dwells (as Jesus did) upon the incommensurable *difference* between the seed and the plant which springs from it. And hence the " change " which we are to expect is not to be regarded as the gradual elaboration of faculties we inherently possess, but as something wrought for us, " in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." In Phil.III.21 he makes it very plain that this is not our work: " We wait," he says, " for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his Glory, according to the working whereby *he is able* to subdue all things unto himself." It is evident that this means very much more than the immortality of the soul, if by that we understand no more than " the soul's survival of bodily death." The notion of a " naked " soul was evidently highly distasteful to St. Paul, and he assumes that

mankind generally ("we") feels as he does about it, — that it is

A faith as vague as all unsweet.

"Not that we should be *unclothed*, but that we would be clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven, that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life" (2 Cor.v.1–4). In fact, mankind has generally regarded the notion of the soul's naked survival as either incredible or undesirable. There can be no doubt that the life of the "shades" appeared undesirable to the Greeks; and the doctrine of metempsychosis (transmigration of souls), the only doctrine of survival which commends itself to India and a great part of the orient, has no more solid support than the incredibility of the other common doctrine of survival. The Chinese *koei* (ghost), pitiful as it is, is not by any means an immaterial soul. If St. Paul had been satisfied to preach the immortality of the soul, his speech at Athens need not have ended with a fiasco (Acts xvii.31,32). The Athenians

must have commended him, had he spoken to them of the immortality of the soul; but he chose a very inopportune time to speak of the "resurrection of the dead." And in the chapter we are now studying, where he speaks of "the resurrection of the dead" and affirms repeatedly that Christ was "raised" (verses 4, 12–16, 20, 32, 35, 42–44), no one without conscious duplicity can assert that he meant no more than the soul's immortality.

This does not mean that St. Paul entertained a gross idea of the Kingdom of God when he spoke of the "resurrection of the *body.*" All grossness is excluded by the saying, "sown in corruption, raised in *incorruption;* sown in weakness, raised in power," and most of all by "sown in dishonor, raised in *Glory*" (verses 42, 43, *cf.* 35, 54). It is the *difference* between this body we now have and "the body that shall be" which is illustrated by the analogy of the seed (verses 36–38).

The fact is that St. Paul could justly condemn *us* for the grossness of *our* expectation.

He affirms that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God" (verse 50). What becomes then of the Kingdom of God we are so busily building here on earth? It would seem that we are at fault in applying this name to the Church militant, which has no members that are not of flesh and blood; and still more when we apply it to the Holy Roman Empire, — or, let us say, to the Holy American Republic which we aim after.

It may be admitted that we do not mean so much as we pretend to mean by this mode of speech. We mean it in a "Pickwickian sense." For while we labor to bring about this Kingdom of God on earth, we are not altogether unmindful of the promise of the Kingdom of Heaven. We would have all this (our reward *now*), and possibly heaven too. But the first, seeming more real to us and more sure, determines our specific orientation, — which we know very well is not the orientation Jesus impressed upon his disciples.

But also about this Kingdom of *Heaven* (which is really not another kingdom) St.

Paul does not think so grossly as we. Not only does he exclude flesh and blood from it, but he would have no *souls* in it, not even the most finely fibered!

We have an ancient and (humanly speaking) an imposing tradition to get rid of before we can understand St. Paul. As early as the beginning of the second century the Church appropriated, from the loftiest tradition of Greek philosophy, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. This became in time an item of Christian orthodoxy, without excluding the resurrection of the dead. But lately we have become content with the more philosophic idea and rarely reflect that there ever was anything more in the Christian hope. Therefore our aim is to refine the soul so as to prepare it for its heavenly destiny. To this end all elements of culture may contribute, but it seems as if its aesthetic side would be the most efficacious. Some moderns opine that even if the soul is not inherently immortal, it can attain, by moral or aesthetic refinement, to " immortability." We stumble here over the awkward consequence

that many of the "saints" were neither cultured nor refined enough to attain this end. The late Mr. Moody, for example, was not refined and certainly did not look immortal; and the same may be said of Dr. Martin Luther.

St. Paul, in this connection, has nothing whatever to say about the soul and its refinement or its immortality. Very naturally; for if souls cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, all such questions are impertinent to his theme. Well then, if this very refined Kingdom of God is too refined for souls, what can it have in it? "Bodies," answers Paul (verses 35–40), — and for this reason we conceive that he is grosser than we! Not a "*soulish* body," however, is what he is thinking of, but a "*spiritual* body" (verse 44). That evidently implies a very great "change." Inasmuch as the Kingdom of God is essentially *eternal* (and not merely of endless duration), we to enter it, being not essentially immortal, and not obviously spiritual, must "*put on* immortality" (verse 53). This is what St. Paul means

when (in 2 Cor.v.1) he speaks of "our house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

St. Paul thought more soberly about the soul, and more justly, than we. Because we think of the soul as inherently immortal, we are greatly embarrassed to attribute such a thing to the animals below us and to plants, through all the scale of life, — and yet our evolutionary philosophy forbids us to draw a line. Paul felt no embarrassment in recognizing that the soul is the organizing principle of all "flesh" and of every "seed" and plant (verses 37–39). Hence "body," as we know it, corresponds to "soul" — "to every seed its own body," perfectly appropriate. When I read of "celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial" (verse 40) I cannot help thinking that St. Paul, like Fechner, extended to the stars the binomial analogy, body-soul. At all events, it is clear that this passage is in perfect conformity with the newest (neolamarkian) biology (still resisted doggedly in England and America), which regards the soul or life as the organiz-

ing principle of all living bodies on this earth. "Behaviorism," if it were not a word so foolishly misused, might serve us well to describe the study of that activity of souls which we must account the most characteristic and the most marvelous: the organization of their bodies. For what the soul does in other ways, to which we commonly limit the word behavior, and with which psychology chiefly deals, is not nearly so significant nor so cunning. What the soul does with hands and feet (or paws or claws or tarsi or pseudopodia), with fins or tail or wings, that it moves from place to place, or utters cries which are more or less intelligible, does not reveal so clearly its amazing qualities as does the still and silent life of the plant, whose only deeds are the production of its own body, and its flowers the fairest of them. Therefore, the development of the embryo (the production of hands and feet and tongue and brain) being not so open to our observation, plant life offers the most favorable field for the study of essential psychology. With seed and plant St. Paul begins

his argument, contemplating then the whole animal kingdom, including men ("all flesh"), and embracing in the scope of this analogy even "bodies" which are not of flesh. The assumption is that the binomial analogy (soul-body), which has so broad a basis, is not irrelevant to our "body which shall be," — the difference is that this is to be organized not by soul but by spirit.

We are compelled to ask, By what spirit? Among Biblical scholars it is a commonplace that St. Paul never says "spiritual" without thinking of the divine Spirit. We are surprised at that, because *we*, when we say spirit or spiritual, intend only to indicate a certain refinement of soul. We can mean nothing more unless we conceive that spirit in all its manifestations is akin to the divine Spirit, and hence ultimately derived from it. It might not be an unwelcome thought that *our* spirit is not independently ours — not enough ours to be called *us*. Our common locution suggests this: we *are* souls, but we *have* a spirit.

In conformity with this conception of

spirit we are compelled to recognize that "the body which shall be" is not wrought by us independently of God. In 2 Cor.v.5 St. Paul says, "he that wrought us for this very thing is God." But to this he adds, "who gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit." Now, an "earnest" is a *portion* given in advance. So already we can claim (without boasting) that besides being a soul we have a spirit which may even now be operating (perhaps in some such way as Fechner suggests) to form "the body that shall be." This therefore is *our* work, even if it is not independently ours. So St. Paul says (Phil.II.12), "Work out your own salvation, for it is God that worketh in you." This would seem to be a proud enough collaboration with God, a sufficient incentive to "do the works of the Lord"—not in a spirit of competition, but "by the strength which God supplieth." It plainly justifies the solemn exhortation which concludes this great chapter: "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, *always abounding in the work of the Lord*, for-

asmuch as ye know that *your labor is not in vain in the Lord.*"

But this does not justify us in the delusion that we can do anything more than prepare the way for the coming of the Kingdom of God — and that chiefly by reforming ourselves. If it is really *God's* Kingdom we have in mind, we can trust him to bring it about. We should have less doubt of this, if we were not misled by the word kingdom. That word suggests a political constitution and other practical arrangements which might conceivably require our consent and collaboration. For this reason "kingdom" is not the best word at our disposal for rendering the central proclamation of the Gospel. Though we are not likely to change our accustomed phrase, it is agreed that God's Reign would be a better one. That plainly excludes our participation in the government, insists that God's will alone insures blessedness for us and for all, and promises that we shall not always be miserably left to our own devices. It affirms, too, that there are not *two* Kingdoms (one which we build

on earth, and another which God builds in heaven), but that there is one divine *will* in heaven and in earth. Kingdom of Heaven is a phrase we find only in St. Matthew's Gospel. This fact does not suggest a reasonable suspicion that it may not be genuine. On the contrary, it seems probable that this is the more original phrase, "Heaven" being used by Jesus in other connections (Mk.VIII. 11; XI.30,31; Lk.XV.7), like "the Power" and "the Highest" (Mk.XIV.62; Lk.I.32, 35, 76; VI.35) out of regard for the Jewish scruple against pronouncing the name of God (Mt.XXIII.32). But then it means nothing different from Kingdom of God. We can understand why it was not used in the mission to the Gentiles, who knowing no such scruple, must have found that phrase archaic and misleading.

I have assumed that God's Reign is the pervading theme of the chapter we have been studying. We have not been accustomed to that thought. But at least in one passage (verses 22–28) the reference to God's Reign is explicit, and the argument

for the necessity of its being God's alone it is pressed with a relentless logic which takes our breath away. Christ does actually reign (in that sense the Kingdom is not merely a future event), and he shall reign until he has abolished all hostile rule, authority and power — and *then* " he shall deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father." " For he *must* reign until he hath put all his enemies under his feet," — including the last enemy, " Death." " For when it is said, ' All things are subjected,' it is evident that He is excepted who did subject all things unto him. And when all things have been subjected unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected to Him that did subject all things unto him, that God may be all in all."

It is evident from this amazing passage that St. Paul was more of a Unitarian than a Tritheist. Such of us as boast of a " Christocentric theology," and appropriate to ourselves a part of the credit for building God's Kingdom, can hardly understand St. Paul's jealousy for God, his indignation at any

thought that would rob God of a part of his Glory. He was not alone in this, for St. Peter writes (1 Peter IV.1), "That in all things God may be glorified, through Jesus Christ." But Paul's zeal seems excessive when he insists that between God and his creatures not even the Son may forever intervene — "that God may be all in all." This, however, is to "preach Christ" — as Jesus preached Christ when he proclaimed, not his own reign, but the Reign of God.

The essential creed of Jesus and of Paul and of the whole Church is briefly comprehended in the solemn asseveration that *God is God*. Because we have lost our grip on this creed we cannot but stumble over the dictum, "God all in all," and cannot but err, as we have long been doing, about the Kingdom of God. When we remember that Resurrection of the dead and Kingdom of God are inseparable terms, Jesus' words (Mk.XII. 24) are seen to apply here: "Is it not for this cause that ye err, that ye know not the Scriptures, nor the *power of God?*" And this is precisely the cause St. Paul alleges in

this chapter (verse 34) for our misunderstanding of the Kingdom of God: "I say this to shame you," he says, that "some have not the least notion of God." It would be no shame for us to confess that we have not an adequate *knowledge* of the Unknown God. That indeed would be a presumptuous claim. But it is not extravagant to expect that men might have some notion of God — should remember at least that God is God, and should be prompt to test by that most primary truth every pretense of theological knowledge, whether it be lay or clerical. Every idol that we create, to produce the impression that we know more of God than we do know, we must be prompt to destroy by the muezzin shout that "God is God." When we create God in our own image, and even when we call him Father, we must correct the earthly analogy by the recollection that after all God is God. "How much more!" said Jesus when he had said about God all that could be said.

"Ye have not the least notion of God," is Lietzmann's translation, which Barth

heartily adopts, with the suggestion that this text " ought to be inscribed on pulpits and such like places." However inappropriate, it would not be out of place on those pulpits where earnest preachers stand to exhort their flocks to build the fold. If only we knew so much as this, that God is God, we would tolerate no such preaching.

I have said that no creed is so essential as the creed of Islam: " God is God." Shall we as Christians add to this creed, " And Jesus is his Prophet " ? No, we who are Trinitarians dare not use such a phrase — for fear of diminishing the Glory of God by putting in front of him so prodigious a man. We are constrained to *confound* our prophet with God (" that God may be all in all "), and to declare that it is God himself that speaks to us in Jesus' word and deed. We mean nothing less than this, and nothing more, nothing different, when we say that *essentially* Jesus (the peasant prophet from Nazareth in Galilee) is not merely a prophet but the Word, not a mere creature but the Son.

Though we are warned not to rob God of

his Glory as his competitors, we are nevertheless encouraged to hope that we shall share in it as recipients of his grace.

In one place (1 Thess.II.12) St. Paul speaks of God as "calling us into his own Kingdom and Glory." Since by "Kingdom" and "Glory" he evidently does not mean *two* things, we have here an indication how incommensurable with God's Kingdom is all that we can effect in ourselves and in our environment. We have only to consider what "Glory" means in the Old Testament and in the New.

"Not of the sunlight, not of the moonlight, not of the starlight." What then? Is it the light of the highest human inspiration, "the Gleam"? No, it is the "light unapproachable" in which God dwells. Yet we are invited to approach! Two of Jesus' disciples deserved rebuke for their presumption in asking him for the chief places of honor "in thy Glory" (Mk.x.37); but they were not at fault in understanding that Christ indeed "welcomed them to the Glory of God" (Rom.xv.7), that by God they had been

" prepared beforehand to receive Glory" (Rom.IX.23), even " the freedom of the Glory of the children of God" (Rom.VIII. 21). These very disciples professed themselves ready " to share his sufferings in order to share his Glory" (Rom.VIII.17). They understand better than we do how *passive* a rôle is assigned to us in the preparation of the Kingdom of God. When we observe how often St. Paul uses the word Glory as a synonym for God's Reign, we are admonished that what is promised us in the Gospel is not only beyond our ability to accomplish, but beyond our capacity to conceive.

" *Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not,*
And which entered not into the heart of man,
Whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him."

(1 Cor.II.9)

If there were any propriety in speaking of *two* Kingdoms, one of which we establish in time, and the other God himself estab-

lishes in eternity, we must feel that, for all the religious glamour we have cast about the first, it is " not worthy to be compared with the Glory which shall be revealed to us-ward " (Rom.VIII.18), that as a terrestrial glory it does not even match the " glory of the stars," and is not to be weighed at all with " a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory " (2 Cor.IV.17), to which we are called through the Gospel, even " unto the obtaining of the Glory of our Lord Jesus Christ " (2 Thess.II.14). Extravagant as this promise is, we are not permitted to understand anything less by the Gospel of the Kingdom, and we are taught even to " exult in the hope of the Glory of God " (Rom.V.2).

May God bless the preaching of his Word.

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